



**BEING, CHANGE AND POLITICS:**

**THE SEARCH FOR MEANING: MATERIAL AND FORM IN CONTEXT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ART**

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

**Rushdi Anwar**  
MFA

School of Art  
College of Design and Social Context  
RMIT University

June 2016

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis/project is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Rushdi Anwar  
20/06/2016

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Professor David Thomas for his enthusiasm, profound generosity and trust, for his patience and supervision.

I would like to thank Associate Professor Peter Ellis, Dr Ruth Johnstone, Dr Richard Harding and Dr Peter Hill, for their insightful comments and feedbacks.

My greatest thanks to my lifetime friend and family member Dr Muhammad Kamal who provided me constant support and encouragement, without him it would not be possible to conduct this project. I could not have imagined having a better friend and mentor.

I thank my fellow candidates, friends and staff of the School of Art, RMIT University for the stimulating discussions and supports.

My great thanks to my dearest family: my mother, sisters and brother, for supporting me.

## **DEDICATION**

In memory, love and support of my father (1944-2006)

To my mother

To the innocent victims of socio-political violence

To those who are seeking the light



## CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	7
ABSTRACT .....	17
INTRODUCTION .....	18
<b>CHAPTER ONE: THINKING THROUGH THEORY: NOTION AND PERCEPTION OF CHANGE, FORM, AND MATTER .....</b>	<b>23</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE .....	23
1.2. DEFINITION OF CHANGE .....	24
1.3. "BEING" .....	27
1.4. THING .....	27
1.5. EARTH AND WORLD: IN CONTEXT OF REVEALING THE TRUTH .....	31
1.6. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER ONE .....	32
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THINKING THROUGH PRACTICE: MATERIAL, FORM, MEDIUM, EXPERIENCE AND PROCESS OF MAKING .....</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TWO .....	33
2.2. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE .....	33
2.3. DORIS SALCEDO .....	34
2.4. HIWA K .....	43
2.5. MONA HATOUM .....	51
2.6. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS .....	59
2.7. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER TWO .....	64
<b>CHAPTER THREE: PROJECTS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE .....	65
3.2. PROJECT 1: <i>HANGING ISSUES</i> .....	66
3.3. PROJECT 2: <i>PAST IN THE PRESENT</i> .....	76
3.4. PROJECT 3: <i>KNOWING AND UNKNOWING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE</i> .....	85
3.5. PROJECT 4: <i>IRHAL (EXPEL) HOPE AND SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT</i> .....	99
3.6. PROJECT 5: <i>FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER AND FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT</i> .....	123
3.7. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER THREE .....	143

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>APPROPRIATE DURABLE RECORD (ADR) .....</b>	<b>156</b>

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Rushdi Anwar, visual diagram overview of the notion of change. ....	26
Figure 2. Rushdi Anwar, visual diagram overview of “Being”. ....	27
Figure 3. Doris Salcedo, <i>Unland</i> , 1995- 1998, installation view. ....	35
Foreground, <i>Unland the Orphan's Tunic</i> , 1997, (Collection, Fundacio 'La Caixa', Barcelona), wood, cloth, hair, 80 x 245 x 98 cm. ....	35
Background, left, <i>Unland Audible In The Mouth</i> , 1998, (Collection, Tate Gallery, London), wood, thread, hair, 74.5 x 315 x 80 cm. ....	35
Background right, <i>Unland Irreversible Witness</i> , 1995-98, (Collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), wood, cloth, metal, hair, 112 x 249 x 89 cm. ....	35
Figure 4. Doris Salcedo, <i>Unland the Orphan's Tunic</i> , (detail), (Collection, Fundacio 'La Caixa', Barcelona), 1995- 1998, wood, cloth, hair, 80 x 245 x 98 cm. ....	36
Figure 5. Doris Salcedo, <i>Untitled</i> , 1990s – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel, installation view. ....	39
Figure 6. Doris Salcedo, <i>Untitled</i> , (Collection, Art Institute of Chicago), 1992 – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel, 130 x 214 x 58 cm. ....	41
Figure 7. Doris Salcedo, <i>Untitled</i> , (detail), 1990s – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel. ....	42
Figure 8. Doris Salcedo, <i>Untitled</i> , (detail), 1990s – ongoing project, wood, cloth, concrete, steel. ....	42
Figure 9. Hiwa K, <i>The Bell</i> , the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, double screen video and bronze bell on a base. ....	44
Figure 10. Hiwa K, <i>The Bell</i> , (iconography details), the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, bronze bell on a base installation view. ....	46
Figure 11. Destruction of artefacts and reproductions in Mosul Museum by Islamic State (IS), video still of alleged IS militant defacing ancient artefacts in Mosul Museum, Gates of Nineveh archive. ....	47
Figure 12. Hiwa K, <i>The Bell</i> , the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, (detail) melted wasted weapons, process of casting, still image video. ....	49
Figure 13. Mona Hatoum, <i>Lili (stay) Put</i> , 1996, metal bed frame, wheels and nylon threads, installation view. ....	54
Figure 14. Mona Hatoum, <i>Doormat</i> , 1996, doormat, stainless steel pines, nickel-plated pins, glue, canvas, 3 x 71 x 405 cm. ....	55

Figure 15. Mona Hatoum, <i>Prayer Mat</i> , 1995, nickel-plated brass pins, brass compass, glue, canvas. ....	56
Figure 16. Mona Hatoum, <i>Drowning Sorrows</i> , 2014, cut bottles, dimensions variable. ....	58
Figure 17. “Kurdistan” divided into four parts, among Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. ....	59
Figure 18. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space/Baan Monfai, Chiang Mai, Thailand, installation view. ....	66
Figure 19. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Untitled</i> , 2010, installation view. ....	67
Figure 20. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	69
Figure 21. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	69
Figure 22. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	71
Figure 23. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	72
Figure 24. Martin Pope, <i>Jusim Muhammad</i> , an eight-year-old victim of a chemical attack in Halabja 1988. ....	72
Figure 25. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , the panels were displayed in zigzag layout (detail), 2012. ....	74
Figure 26. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , installation structure zigzag format graphic layout (detail), 2012. ....	74
Figure 27. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra), <i>Landlock</i> exhibition, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013. ....	76
Figure 28. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, <i>Landlock</i> exhibition, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013. ....	77
Figure 29. (Left), <i>Halabja Chemical Attack</i> or <i>Halabja Massacre</i> , March 16, 1988	
Figure 30. (Right), Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke, and mixed medium on board, 15 x 10 cm. ....	79
Figure 31. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012- 2013, (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra), photograph print on paper, 118 x 88 cm. ....	80
Figure 32. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke and mixed medium on board, 30 x 150 cm. ....	82
Figure 33. <i>Past in the Present</i> , (detail), 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke, smoke on sand paper and mixed medium ....	83

Figure 34. <i>Past in the Present</i> , (detail), 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke, smoke on sand paper and mixed medium, 20 x 30 cm. ....	84
Figure 35. <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and black pigment. ....	85
Figure 36. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, <i>Tiza (Lima) Chalk (Lima)</i> , 2002, Installation, Pasaja Santa Rosa, Bienal de Lima, 12 sticks of chalk, each 163 cm long and about 20 cm in diameter. ....	88
Figure 37. <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk on black stage. ....	89
Figure 38. <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk on black stage, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney 2013, installation views. ....	90
Figure 39. Wolfgang Laib, <i>Pollen from Hazelnut</i> , 2013, the atrium of the Museum of Modern Art. ....	91
Figure 40. Richard Long, <i>Walking a Circle in Mist</i> , Scotland, 1986. ....	92
Figure 41. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2014, installation views ....	92
Figure 42. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014. ....	93
Figure 43. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and black pigment. ....	93
Figure 44. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2012- 2014, HD Video sound one channel, Length: 4 min 30 sec, still image. ....	94
Figure 45. <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, HD Video sound, installation view. ....	95
Figure 46. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, HD Video, still image. ....	96
Figure 47. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Installation view .....	99
Figure 48. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2013, installation dimensions variable, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view. ....	104
Figure 49. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2014, Dark Horse Experiment Gallery, Melbourne, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view. ....	104

Figure Top 50. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2013, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view .	105
Figure Bottom 51. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , (detail), 2013. ....	105
Figure 52. Auschwitz, Poland, A pile of shoes in the museum .....	108
Figure 53. Doris Salcedo, <i>Untitled</i> , installation at 8th International Istanbul Biennial, 200.	103
Figure 54. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, <i>Untitled (Lover Boys)</i> , 1991, pile of candy.....	109
Figure 55. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, <i>Untitled</i> , 1991, viewers are encouraged to take a page of the artwork with them.....	109
Figure 56. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, "Art for Social Change" Exhibition, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view .....	110
Figure 57. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University Installation view .....	111
Figure 58. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , (detail), 2015 .....	114
Figure 59. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , (detail), 2015 .....	115
Figure 60. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University Installation view .....	117
Figure 61. <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , (details) 2015.....	117
Figure 62. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015 .....	119
Figure 63. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015 .....	119
Figure 64. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015, objects.....	120
Figure 65. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015 .....	120
Figure 66. Mona Hatoum, <i>Untitled (Wheelchair)</i> , 1998 .....	122
Figure 67. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015. ....	123
Figure 68. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2015. ....	126
Figure 69. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012- 2013.....	126
Figure 70. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012- 2013.....	121
Figure 71. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, HD video sound installation, one channel, length: 12 min 30 sec, still image video .....	128

Figure 72. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, still image video ....	128
Figure 73. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, still image video ....	129
Figure 74. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, still images video ..	129
Figure 75. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, still image video ....	132
Figure 76. Remains of the fragments of photograph masked with black tape .....	135
Figure 77. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2015, the process of making, metal.....	135
Figure 78. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , photograph printed on paper, 48 x 34 x 16 cm .....	136
Figure 79. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , Metal and paint, installation dimensions variable, Installation view .....	137
Figure 80. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail) .....	137
Figure 81. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail). 30 x 22 x 10 cm.....	138
Figure 82. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail). 25 x 18 x 8 cm.....	139
Figure 83. Janine Antoni, <i>Gnaw</i> , 1992, 600 pounds of chocolate, and lard, gnawed by the artist, Collection the Museum of Modern Art, New York, installation dimensions variable..	142

#### **Appropriate Durable Record (ADR): Visual documentation of the research projects processes and outcomes**

Figure 84. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Monfai Cultural Center / Living Museum, Chiang Mai, Thailand, installation view .....	157
Figure 85. Rushdi Anwar, texture of handmade Thai paper (Kada Saa) the skin of the Saa's bark dried out, Idin Paper Mill, Lampang, Thailand, 2012. ....	157
Figure 86. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	158
Figure 87. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	158

Figure 88. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Idin Paper Mill with master paper maker (Suphan Promsen), the process of making, Lampang, Thailand. ....	159
Figure 89. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, the processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	159
Figure 90. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	160
Figure 91. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	160
Figure 92. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand. ....	161
Figure 93. Rushdi Anwar, Idin Paper Mill, Lampang, Thailand, 2012. ....	161
Figure 94. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	162
Figure 95. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Monfai Cultural Center / Living Museum, Chiang Mai, Thailand. ....	162
Figure 96. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2015 Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, The Atrium Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia, installation view. ....	163
Figure 97. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Hanging Issues</i> , 2015 Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, The Atrium Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia, installation view. ....	163
Figure 98. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra), 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke, photograph, smoke on board, and Smoke on sand paper and mixed medium, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013. ....	164
Left: Figure 99. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on board and mixed medium. ....	165
Right: Figure 100. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on board and mixed medium. ....	165
Figure 101. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on canvas and mixed medium, 26 x 20 cm. ....	165
Figure 102. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on canvas and mixed medium, installation dimensions variable, installation view. ....	166
Figure 103. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Material Perception (Part 1)</i> collaboration exhibition, 2014, D11 Artist-Led Exhibition Space, Melbourne, installation view. ....	166
Figure 104. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke on board and mixed medium, 15 x 20 cm. ....	167



Figure 105. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , ( <i>Matter and Space</i> , group exhibition), 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Chiang Mai, Thailand. ....	167
Figure 106. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , ( <i>The after State</i> , collaboration exhibition), 2014, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, installation view. ....	168
Figure 107. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , ( <i>The after State</i> , collaboration exhibition), 2014, details. ....	168
Figure 108. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Landlock</i> exhibition, 2013, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view. ....	169
Figure 109. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition details). ....	169
Figure 110. <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and dark pigment. ....	170
Figure 111. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition), 2013, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney. ....	171
Figure 112. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2013, ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of white chalk on dark platform. ....	171
Figure 113. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2013, ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of crushed white chalk on dark platform. ....	172
Figure 114. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , (detail), 2013, ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of fine dust of crushed white chalk on dark platform.....	172
Figure 115. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2013, still image, video, 4.30 minutes, HD video sound installation, one channel. ....	173
Figure 116. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2014, RMIT University, building two, installation view. ....	173
Figure 117. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2014, ( <i>Material Perception</i> , collaboration exhibition), First Site Gallery, Melbourne, installation view. ....	174
Figure 118. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2013, ( <i>Landlock</i> exhibition), Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view. ....	174
Figure 119. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Knowing and Unknowing</i> , <i>Circle of Hope and Struggle</i> , 2014, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University, white chalk and dark, pigment, dimensions variable, installation view. ....	175
Figure 120. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel)</i> , <i>Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, Installation view. ....	176

Figure 121. Rushdi Anwar, collecting a discarded chair from roadside trash, Melbourne, 2015. ....	176
Figure 122. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , some sketches of installations options early stages, 2013-2014. ....	177
Figure 123. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , testing a pile of chairs, 2015. ....	178
Figure 124. Rushdi Anwar, burning process, 2012. ....	178
Figure 125. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , during the process of putting together the chairs, early stage of installing the work, 2015. ....	179
Figure 126. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , early stage of installation the work, 2015. ....	180
Figure 127. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, ( <i>Art for Social Change</i> ), Incinerator Art Award, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view. ....	180
Figure 128. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2014, the process of installing the work. ....	181
Figure 129. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2014, ( <i>Chaos: Yesterday and today</i> exhibition) Dark Horse Experiment Gallery, Melbourne, installation view. ....	181
Figure 130. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, (detail). ....	182
Figure 131. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, Installation view. ....	182
Figure 132. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, (detail), Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne. ....	183
Figure 133. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, de-installing view. ....	183
Figure 134. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, installing view, L 750 x W 220 x H 250 cm. ....	184
Figure 135. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, installing view. ....	184
Figure 136. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, before installing the work. ....	185
Figure 137. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , the burning chairs covered with snow, Toronto, Canada, 2016. ....	185

Figure 138. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Irhal (Expel)</i> , <i>Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement</i> , 2015, (Art for Social Change), Incinerator Art Award, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view, L 600 x W 200 x H 250 cm. ....	186
Figure 139. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, still images, video sound installation, one channel, 12 min 30 sec. ....	187
Figure 140. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , some sketches of the work early stage, 2013-2014. ....	187
Figure 141. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, photograph and masking tape. ....	188
Figure 142. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape. ....	188
Figure 143. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape. ....	189
Figure 144. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape. ....	189
Figure 145. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, video still image. .	190
Figure 146. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, video still image. .	190
Figure 147. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, video still image. .	191
Figure 148. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, video still image. .	191
Figure 149. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, ( <i>Lost in Translocation</i> ) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, photograph crumpled on the shelf. ....	192
Figure 150. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, ( <i>Lost in Translocation</i> ) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, installation view. ....	192
Figure 151. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2014-2015, ( <i>The after State</i> collaboration exhibition), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, Metal and paint, Installation view. ....	193
Figure 152. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , some sketches of the work early stage, 2012-2014. ....	193
Figure 153. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Past in the Present</i> , (detail), 2012. ....	194
Figure 154. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2015. ....	194
Figure 155. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Facing living: The Past in the Present</i> , 2015, remains of the photographs and masking tape. ....	195
Figure 156. A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-rigged vehicle, Iraq, (File Photo: Reuters), 2014. ....	195
Figure 157. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2014. ....	196

Figure 158. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2014-2015. ....	196
Figure 159. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2014-2015. ....	197
Figure 160. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2014-2015. ....	198
Figure 161. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2014-2015. ....	199
Figure 162. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2015, photographs printed on paper and burnt wooden self, 45 x 30 x 20 cm. ....	200
Figure 163. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2015, photographs printed on paper, 45 x 35 x 20 cm. ....	201
Figure 164. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , 2014-2015, ( <i>Lost in Translocation</i> ) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, Metal and paint, Installation view. ....	202
Figure 165. Rushdi Anwar, <i>Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter</i> , (detail), 2014-2015. ....	202
Figure 166. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	203
Figure 167. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	203
Figure 168. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	203
Figure 169. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	204
Figure 170. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	204
Figure 171. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	205
Figure 172. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view. ....	205

# **BEING, CHANGE AND POLITICS: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING: MATERIAL AND FORM IN CONTEXT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ART**

## **ABSTRACT**

This practice-led research project examines and researches the meaning of matter and form in the context of particular socio-political issues in art. It employs art practice as a realm to investigate the relationships between notions of change, politics and renewal.

Through this project I will develop artworks that exploit specific materials and forms in order to address philosophical, social and political issues relating to destruction, transience, being and renewal. To achieve this I will investigate and employ appropriate imagery, forms and media informed by contemporary art practice in the context of socio-political issues (displacement, trauma and political violence).

This study has been informed and developed from my own narrative, based on my background as a Kurd who has lived through the recent socio-political history of the Kurdistan region of Iraq and the Middle East. I will extend from this personal base in order to address the broader issues of suffering, disruption and renewal relating to individuals in other societies and places. In doing this, my objective is to create artworks that evoke socio-political issues whilst addressing broader issues that include the transience of being, deconstruction, renewal and hope in the world, common to all humanity. To manifest these ideas as artworks I will research and explore appropriate forms in both installation and object based practices. The work will focus on materiality, form and process as key signifiers in addressing the above content. Through the use of multidisciplinary medium this project will reveal my investigations into the physical properties of object (matter and form), and their meaning addressing cultural as well as personal references.

The project is informed by research into criticism and theory in a contemporary community of art practice which focuses on materiality and politics of the contemporary Middle East and into the philosophical concepts of “matter and form”, based on selected theories of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger. My practical research is contextualised by addressing the work of relevant contemporary artists including Doris Salcedo, Hiwa K and Mona Hatoum.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This project practice-based art research explores and addresses the notions and meaning of matter and form in the context of socio-political issues in contemporary art.

## **THE PROJECT STUDY'S AIMS, OBJECTIVE**

This research project is structured to find significant meaning in contemporary art practice in connection with theoretical ideas and trends in the context of socio-political issues, in the recent political history of Kurdistan, Iraq and the Middle East. The project's key objective is to produce artworks that highlight the human condition, and to reflect upon how and when under difficult situations humanity seeks hope and renewal in art. To seek light, in my case, is to assert the redemptive role of art.

## **THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT HAS THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF AIMS:**

1. To produce works, objects and installation that emphasise and promote the critical role of material and form in order to evoke socio-political issues in the artwork.
2. To explore materials that generate and recapture the chaotic feel of aggression and violence.
3. To contribute to ideas in relationship to contemporary art practice through the process of making, structure, installation, techniques and display.
4. To place the ideas of hope and renewal in relationship to contemporary social and political issues such as space of violence, dislocation and trauma.
5. To investigate contemporary Middle Eastern artwork and how it deals with conflicts and trauma such as displacement and political violence or events.
6. To place the ideas in relationship to philosophical theory of material and form in particular aspects such as material, form and change.

## **TO ACHIEVE THIS THE PROJECT WILL EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. How can my experience and knowledge of the socio-political issues in recent Kurdish history be applied to inform artworks that address the broader human condition regarding change, transience and renewal?
2. What material properties, processes, pictorial conventions and installation practices can be employed in order to amplify and reflect on the complex experience of being in the world and to reconcile ideas relating to suffering, beauty, change and politics?
3. In what ways can I employ Mulla Sadra's and Martin Heidegger's theories of matter and form to inform the production of new works that address the issues in relation to socio-political content?

## **THE METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT**

This practice-led project's research methodology is primarily one of testing through making. This will be supplemented by library research and primary research through interview. Its basic methodology consists of a narrative-based research that contains quantitative and qualitative methodologies, employing a trial and error method to develop artworks and new knowledge.

My research project examines the materials and forms that will be used for creating the works of art. Both elements (material and form) will play important roles in carrying out expression and significance of subject matter. Discussion regarding the choice of material and forms as well as the theoretical underpinning in this project will be undertaken to enable the consideration of cultural as well as personal references to be understood.

The project will be undertaken in the following manner and discussed in the body of this dissertation, through:

1. Gathering, selection and organisation of imagery ideas from various sources, for example drawing, data reference, object, photographs, documents data, historical photos, visual diary, interviews, case study, fieldwork, workshop and formal/informal knowledge.
2. Production of research studies and work in the studio through the process of making and manipulation of object (material and form) that formed with theoretical perspectives, data references and live experiences.
3. Configuration/proceeding of concepts and thoughts, form, materials, and various methods of making through development of making in the studio.
4. Contextualisation and description of my experimentation with materials, form and the process of making artworks.
5. Evaluation and development of my processes of making the artworks and through contextualising this in the dissertation.

## **METHODS**

Firstly, I will test and select appropriate materials and techniques to generate two-dimensional and three-dimensional works. This study explores and experiments with a diverse range of materials such as smoke (soot), charcoal, wood, paper, plaster, pigment, photographs and found objects. They are chosen for their ephemeral and significant readings as well as their ability to create form.

Secondly, this research project embraces the process of learning by making and will search for appropriate solutions for its production. The process learning by making will create opportunities to find a dialogue and responses between elements including specific sites, structures, installations, compositions, surface, material vocabulary and form. New artworks will be generated and tested in the following three ways:

- 1- Specific sites: open spaces, closed spaces, in order to generate specific readings and experiences.
- 2- Experimentation with the construction of appropriate structures in order to amplify content.
- 3- The principles of juxtaposition and superimposition will be applied to reveal new readings and the particular characteristics of materials and forms.

The properties and readings will be recorded in context of the project as a research study. The project will be multidisciplinary and will include installation, video works, photography, painting, sculpture and found objects.

In addition, throughout this project my production of knowledge will be placed and examined in relation to relevant art activities nationally and internationally including exhibitions, collaborations, festivals, artist talks and community art projects.

The project will research the current political and cultural situation in the Middle East and the current social and political situation in Kurdistan.

### **THE PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH**

The practice-based research will utilise different materials and forms in each of the projects. I will examine and explore arrangements and properties of materials (organic, ephemeral, solid, soft, fragile, every day, industrial) and elements (forms, shapes, colours, textures, line, scale and composition). These play an important part overall and they will be foundations to encounter the overall meaning and context of the project artworks.

The project will explore and examine the potential reading and meaning of material and form, through the process of making art. It will examine the affects of the physicality and symbolic meaning of object (material and form). In addition this study will investigate the unique attributes of material and form such as; state of being, surface, texture quality and physical nature. These attributes of material and form will evoke the content of artwork. For instance, our relations and perceptions of a chair (object: material and form) would be different in a range of conditions: in a “good” and stable position rather than in poor and deformed or burnt condition. It manifests the associations and qualities that the medium carries reading different expressions in both context and content.

In this regard the research will look at the content and examine and explore the ideas of Thomas McEvilly, which he addresses in his essay, *“Thirteen Ways Of Looking At A Blackbird”* that;



“1- Content arising from the genre or medium of the artwork, 2- Content arising from the material of which the artwork is made, 3- Content arising from the scale of the work, 4- Content arising from the temporal duration of the artwork”.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE DISSERTATION**

This accompanying dissertation contextualises the artwork produced, including the philosophical and art historical background regarding matter and form in relation to socio-political situations in connection to Kurdistan, Iraq and the Middle East. An appropriate discussion concerning the meaning of matter through form, shape, structure, texture, gesture, techniques, installation and colour will be undertaken, that will lead the process of the form into several outcomes including photography, photo painting, sculpture, found object, installation and video.

This dissertation consists of four chapters and each chapter will address and focus on the following contents. This introduction provides a general background and overview of the contents and summary of the main points of each chapter.

## **CHAPTER ONE: THINKING THROUGH THEORY: NOTION AND PERCEPTION OF CHANGE, FORM AND MATTER**

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section will discuss notion of change based on the philosophy of Mulla Sadra (1572-1640), a Persian philosopher. The second section will deal with the notion of “thingness”<sup>2</sup> (matter and form) in German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s (1889-1976) philosophy.

This project studies specific ideas of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger in regards to change, matter and form. Throughout the study, these ideas will be used as a platform, which will provide insights and a better theoretical understanding towards the development of an appropriate working process in terms of content and context in the production of this project.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THINKING THROUGH PRACTICE: MATERIAL, FORM, MEDIUM, EXPERIENCE AND PROCESS OF MAKING**

This chapter includes two key sections. The first section contextualises my community of practice, and consists of a number of contemporary artists including Doris Salcedo, Hiwa K and Mona Hatoum. These artists employ and use a diverse range of medium to address

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas McEvilley, *Art & Discontent : Theory at the Millennium* (Kingston, N.Y.: McPherson & Co., 1991), 72-75.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger and David Farrell Krell, *Basic Writings : Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2010), 91.

socio-political issues in their artwork. They focus on how to create form and readings through the use and understanding of materiality. This will be the first time these artists have been placed together into this context and is undertaken through primary research and interview.

The last section of this chapter briefly addresses the background of political struggles, violence and historical context of Kurdistan, and the recent socio-political turmoil in the region (Kurdistan, Iraq and Middle East) in the context of recent social and political upheaval.

### **CHAPTER THREE: PROJECTS**

This chapter consists of a number of projects. The development of each project will be described, addressing the underlying artistic conceptions and the processes of making within the theoretical background. In addition to this, I will develop appropriate methods, material vocabulary and form for each project. I will discuss how this manifests content and describe the context for its use.

### **CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION**

This chapter deals with evaluation of the project study and includes my considerations on process of making, learning by doing, testing and finding and the challenges and difficulties encountered during the study. The most important point of this chapter demonstrates and highlights the contribution of this project study to the field of contemporary art practice in Australia as well as in Kurdistan.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**THINKING THROUGH THEORY: NOTION AND PERCEPTION OF CHANGE, FORM AND MATTER**

**OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE**

**1.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE**

**1.2. DEFINITION OF CHANGE**

**1.3. “BEING”**

**1.4. THING**

**1.5. EARTH AND WORLD: IN CONTEXT OF REVEALING THE TRUTH**

**1.6. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER ONE**

**1.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical aspect of “change” and “thing” as two key principal concepts that underpin my thinking in this project. Here, I combine these two concepts based on Mulla Sadra’s understanding of “change” and Martin Heidegger’s concept of a “thing”, to explain how change will affect form and material from one state to another in artworks as well as in life. This change will also disclose the truth through the thing.

This chapter investigates and uses these ideas to stimulate the development and creation of new artworks. At the same time these ideas assist this project by the clarifying and questioning of the nature of the work of art as an object (thing), addressing how the work of art is different from other objects (thing), and where it is situated in the cultural context.

The first section deals with the ideas of change through the philosophical arguments of Mulla Sadra’s thought regarding the material world. The meaning and notion of change are the essential themes of inquiry of this study project. They have a significant function in providing me with an understanding of the complexity of reality. This section is an investigation into the concept of change, potentiality and actuality, and arguments for change in substance. It will explore how all beings in the physical world are actual or potential. Change occurs when being in the state of potentiality is transformed into actuality. The change from potential to actual will be in a state of constant flux. Mulla Sadra is also arguing for change in substance. He holds the view that no change in quality, quantity and loco motion can happen without change in substance.

The second section addresses the philosophical argument of Martin Heidegger in “*The Origin of the Work of Art*”, where he is stating that the work of art is a “thing”<sup>3</sup>, and therefore it is “being”<sup>4</sup>. According to him, any “thing” that has physical existence, is

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

classified as “being”. Any physical thing, which is in place and time is “being”, including artworks. Hence, the work of art as a “thing” is located in place and time; for this reason, it is “being”. It is the characteristic of artwork to open a new world.<sup>5</sup> For Heidegger the artwork is no longer simply imbedded in aesthetic values, but rather in revealing the “truth” of being.

## 1.2. DEFINITION OF CHANGE

The world of things is experienced visually through human sensibility. It is considered to be fixed and static, but in reality everything is in flux and undergoes the process of transformation. Transformation accrues in all things. Change is fundamental and common to all. It is the nature of things. If we investigate the nature of things, we realise that it is composed of “Potentiality and Actuality”, through which change becomes manifest. Every being (a thing) contains “Potentiality and Actuality”. In other words (thing being) is a combination of actuality and potentiality. Mulla Sadra described the relationship of potentiality with actuality as, “Whatever is potential is exactly the same as that which is actual”.<sup>6</sup> As being potential, a thing, therefore can accept different sorts of actuality. As a result, a thing (matter and form) accepts change and can be transformed into another state of being as a thing. For example, Muhammad Kamal states:

Every existent that admits change has some- thing potential in it, which means that it pursues something that is not yet actualized. There has to be potentially something for which change takes place. An existent that admits change is therefore a substance composed of potentiality and actuality, matter and form. Corporeal substances, unlike their counter- parts, are loaded with potency and are capable of being actual. As long as they carry potency, their existence will have a certain degree of privation, and they endeavour to achieve perfection through the gradual process of transubstantial change.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, we experience change in our daily life and witness change in the world. Such as hot and cold, and rise and fall. This process of change is enduring and portrays in thing being (substance). Since “substance” is composite of matter and form, both elements (matter and form) go through potentiality to actuality. All existing beings consist of those two elements (matter and form), they are undergoing this under the influence of change, and nothing remains outside of change. Mulla Sadra for example states: “In general, every material

---

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 44.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Din Shirazi et al., *The Metaphysics of Mulla Sadra : Kitab Al-Mashair = the Book of Metaphysical Prehensions* (New York City, N.Y., U.S.A.: SSIPS, 1992), 100.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Kamal, "Dressing after Dressing: Sadras Interpretation of Change " *Open Journal of Philosophy* Vol.3, no. 1 (2013 2013): 57, <http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperDownload.aspx?DOI=10.4236/ojpp.2013.31009>.

object, whether it is the material of the stars or the elements, whether soul or body, constantly require new identity and its personality and its existence is never fixed".<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that change is a process of transformation from one state of being to a different state. This process of change is classified into two categories: instantaneous change and gradual change.<sup>9</sup>

The first category "instantaneous change" is a sudden transformation of thing (form and matter) from one state to another. Both elements of a thing (matter and form) lose their state and accept evolving states in different matter and form. Instantaneous change is the disappearance of the thing and the forthcoming into existence of another different thing. For instance, when we burn a piece of wood it turns into ash. As a result ash is forthcoming into existence and replays the extinct and disappears into wood. Following Aristotle, this process is termed "generation and corruption" (*kawn wa fasad*).<sup>10</sup>

However, on the other hand, the second category "gradual change" is slow change of a thing. It is continuous flowing change through one state to another state. This kind of change is also called "motion" (*harakat*).<sup>11</sup> Incessant is the core of substantial motion in the very existence of a thing. The whole physical world undergoing continuous motion, flux and unrest are the modes of all things, which exist in the physical world. Substantial motion could not be perceptible. However it is most likely describable or recognisable through rational analysis. In this regards Mohammad Fanaei Eshkevari says that:

The mystics claim to apprehend it by intuition. In order to understand the extension in the unstable dimension of the body, the example of the reflection of a picture on the surface of water is sometimes given. One may think only water is flowing while the picture is still, whereas, in fact, both the water and the picture are in a state of flowing. Sometimes they give the example of the flaming fire whose flames are, instant after instant, in a state of renewal, while the sense perception considers it to be static.<sup>12</sup>

In the physical world all things undergo a sort of change either instantaneous or gradual, because everything we experience in the physical world has holds into actuality and potentiality. Muhammad Kamal, in this regard states: "Every existent is a composite of potentiality and actuality. Change is impossible for an existent that is actual in all respects and is without potentiality".<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi et al., 80.

<sup>9</sup> M. F. Eshkevari, "Mulla Sadra's Theory of Substantial Motion," *Publications - Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society New Series* 5 (2007): 26.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>13</sup> Kamal, 57.

Mulla Sadra categorises change into quantity, quality, place, position and substance. The first four categories of change are the property of substance, and they are assets embedded in substance. Mulla Sadra believes that substance itself does change. He argues that it is impossible for substance to remain the same state while the property of substance is undergoing change. In this point, Mulla Sadra disagrees with some Muslim thinkers and Aristotle who advocate that substance remains the same and is unchangeable.<sup>14</sup>

Eventually being (thing) is substantially in process of change constantly, every existence being (thing) is in continuous process of change. Change is the mode of beings (things) in the world.

### **CHANGE :**

Change occurs when being in the state of **potentiality** is transformed into state of **actuality**. The change from potential to actual will be in a state of constant flux.

### **PROCESS OF CHANGE IS CLASSIFIED INTO TWO SORTS OF CHANGE**

- 1- Instantaneous change
- 2- Gradual change

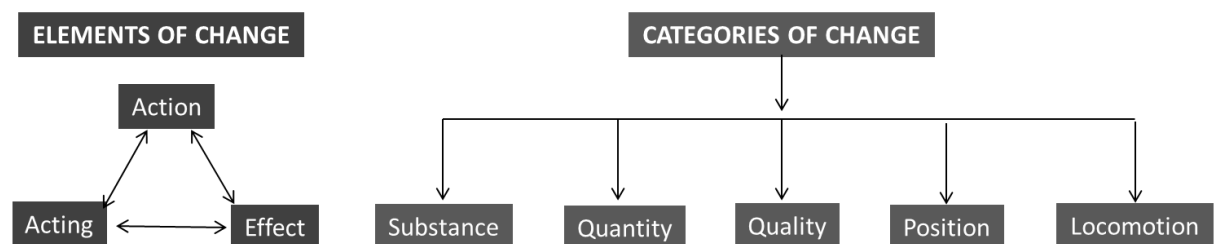


Figure 1. Rushdi Anwar, visual diagram overview of the notion of change.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 56.

### 1.3. "BEING"

Being, for Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger, has ontological priority over everything. It is the ultimate reality and a ground encompassing all kinds of things. All kinds of things are different modes of Being, and show themselves in various ways. Each way depends on an epistemological mode to access it. There are many modes of Being constituting substance, attributes, actions and affections. "Mulla Sadra and Heidegger stress the principality of Being and the reality of Being as a pre-ontological condition for the existence of all beings".<sup>15</sup>

Heidegger has used the terms "Sein" or being as the ontological ground for everything, and "seinden" as an existent. In English "Sein" is translated as "Being" with capital "B", and "seinden" is "being" with small "b". Heidegger wrote that:

Things are, and human beings, gifts, and sacrifices are, animals and plants are, equipment and works are. The particular being stands in Being. Through Being there passes a veiled fatality...Beings are never of our making, or even merely our representations, as it might all too easily seem. When we contemplate this whole as one, then we apprehend, so it appears, all that is – through we grasp it crudely enough.<sup>16</sup>

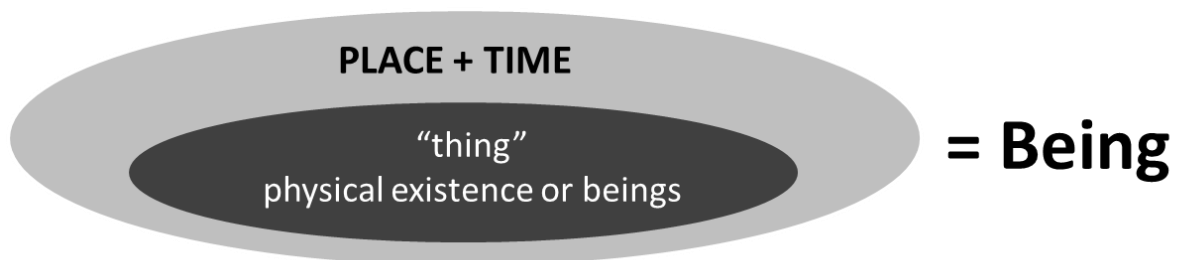


Figure 2. Rushdi Anwar, visual diagram overview of "Being".

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Kamal, *From Essence to Being : The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger* (London: ICAS Press, 2010), 43.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 114.

#### **1.4. THING**

This project begins with an enquiry on artwork as a thing. From the very beginning we ask, in what way can a thing manifest itself and situate in artwork? Why are position and meaning of things in artwork different from everyday use?

#### **WHAT IS A THING?**

What is a thing? In this section I will investigate into and explore the notion of thinghood and understand the fundamental aspects of thinghood. Moreover the most important point is to know the thing-being “thingness”<sup>17</sup> of the thing.

Through “thingness” we will be able to understand the character of a thing. According to Heidegger, any existing entity we experience is a thing, for example a cloud in the sky, a stone, a piece of wood, a book, a cap, a building, a dog, a boy, a forge... etc., are all things. However every single existing being is a thing, natural things inanimate (Still-life) and objects (utensils) are “mere things”. Mere is just being nothing that is specified and nothing more by itself and without being anything more, for example, a nail, a piece of glass, a cap, a stone, a cloud in the sky. In this regard Heidegger says: “‘Mere’ here means, first, pure thing, which is simply a thing and nothing more; but then, at the same time, it means that which is only a thing, in an almost pejorative sense. It is a mere thing excluding even utensils, that count as thing in the proper sense”.<sup>18</sup>

An artwork is no doubt “thing” or some sort of a thing<sup>19</sup>. But the thingness of artwork is more than the “mere thing”, because it cannot be isolated from the other meanings and it has no function of usability or usefulness. Heidegger believes that we will be able to understand this character of an artwork by looking at it and try to grasp what it reveals to us. This consideration of reading the artwork based on description and definition of traditional “Western thought”, where Heidegger classifies “thingly” quality into three categories: (1) the thing as a unity of many experiences, (2) the thing as a substance and (3) the thing as material set in form.

#### **THREE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE “THINGLY” CHARACTER**

##### **THE THING AS A BEARER OF PROPERTIES**

This interpretation focuses on the characteristic properties of the thing. The thing assembles and accumulates properties, as Heidegger says:

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



This block of granite, for example, is a mere thing, It is hard, heavy, extended, bulky, shapeless, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny. We can take note of all these features of the stone. Thus we acknowledge its characteristics. But still, the traits signify something proper to the stone itself. They are its properties. The thing has them. The thing? What are we thinking of when we now have the thing in mind? Obviously a thing is not merely an aggregate of traits, not an accumulation of properties by which the aggregate arises. A thing as everyone thinks he knows, is that around which the properties have assembled. We speak in this connection of the core of things. The Greeks are supposed to have called it to *hupokeimenon*.<sup>20</sup>

Here a thing is composite of sensible qualities experienced by sensibility. Without apprehending these qualities it will be impossible to know the thing, which contains them. This is also based on Aristotle's theory of substance and its accidents. For Aristotle, everything is a substance and has a number of accidents or qualities, some essential and others non-essential. A table, for example, is a substance and has quality, quantity and position. What is important to mention here is that for Aristotle substance is seen as something persistent and change occurs only in the accidents or in the quality, quantity, position and place of the substance. Heidegger also considers the relation of a thing (substance) to its quality to be expressed linguistically, which recognises a specific thing or substance to predicate.

However, we must perceive and experience characteristic properties of a thing directly, in order to identify the thing.<sup>21</sup>

### **THE THING AS OBJECT OF PERCEPTION**

There is also the notion of a thing as the unity or bundle of sensations in the mind that provide us with a perception, or a thing as an object of thought. For example, when I say a table, this notion of thought of a thing experienced by my senses represents a unity of a number of sensations at the time of my encounter with this thing (a table), with that outside of my mind.

### **THE THING AS FORMED MATTER**

The third interpretation is a thing as a formed matter. This interpretation highlights the thing as composite of two elements, matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*)<sup>22</sup>. Things consist of forms attached to matter or they are formalised matters. We experience a thing through matter injected in form or otherwise. Therefore, any existing thing around us indicates

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>21</sup> Karsten Harries, *Art Matters : A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "the Origin of the Work of Art"* ([Dordrecht]: Springer, 2009), 76.

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 96.

matter attached to a form regardless of its nature (mere thing) or tools. Heidegger wrote that: “This interpretation appeals to the immediate view with which the thing solicits us by its outward appearance (*eidōs*). In this synthesis of matter and form a thing-concept has finally been found which applies equally to things of nature and to utensils”.<sup>23</sup>

This is a concept of a thing as matter that a certain form imposed on it. Form informs matter to be a particular kind of thing. Matter and form have a close relationship to each other; this relationship cannot understand distinctly. Aristotle was the first philosopher to consider this necessary relation between form and matter, as he stated that no matter without form and no form without matter could be found in the world. We say form is related to matter to be a specific kind of a thing. The form of a table can be made out of different varieties of materials (wood, glue, nails...etc.). The materials (wood, glue, nails...etc.) are particular sorts of things that make a table. Consequently the table situates in the notions of purpose and usefulness as a thing. As a result, conceptions are of the thing as a particularly lifeless thing (utensils) concealed in purpose and usefulness. According to Heidegger, “A being that falls under usefulness is always the product of a process of making. It is made as a piece of equipment for something”.<sup>24</sup>

With this definition for things as equipment in context of usefulness, Heidegger established to distinguish between the work of art as a thing and equipment as a thing. Both are things—nevertheless they have different positions as “being-thing”. In this regard, Karsten Harries states that: “...To be sure, Heidegger, too, takes it for granted that the work of art is more than just a mere thing. And isn’t it obvious that an artwork is a thing that has been made, and made to be more than just another piece of equipment, such as a pair of shoes”.<sup>25</sup>

It is obvious that the works of art are not situated in the context of usefulness as equipment. Equipment-thing is designed and made of formed matter in the context of usefulness. The existence of the equipment (tool) depends on a purpose of usefulness and need. However, what we consider in relation to the work of art is the reality of things, distant from their usefulness. We attempt to grasp things in their own essence, not in their relation to purposes of usefulness. “Works of art, we said, are things + some aesthetic addendum. And Heidegger agrees that this is how works of art have long been understood: as things to which something else has been added that transforms them into works of art”.<sup>26</sup>

From this definition for works of art, it becomes apparent that the works of art situated in different context to compare with equipment, and the context is “aesthetic”. In other words

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>25</sup> Harries, 70.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 71.

the works of art are situated in the context of “aesthetic” and equipment in the context of “usefulness”. What is the definition of “aesthetic” and the role of works of art? For Heidegger “aesthetic” of works of art is to reveal the “truth” of being.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.5. EARTH AND WORLD (MATTER AND FORM): IN CONTEXT OF REVEALING THE TRUTH

The essence of art is no longer fixed in the frame of beauty or beautiful. But it is found as the truth of being revealed in it. The works of art as most of the objects are “things”, contained of matter and form, but they are not like other works. They create and reconstruct the **world** (form). Therefore in order to create the world (form) we need to have **earth** (matter). The work of art is this creative movement from the earth to the new world. It will transform the earth into something new that did not exist before. Brian Brock wrote that “artwork links earth and world taking both into account by defining or redefining their boundary. Art, then, is not an aesthetic pursuit in the way it is usually described, but is a self-revealing of, or a self-creating of truth by being itself”.<sup>28</sup>

Heidegger sees the work of art as a being; it shows the essence of a thing, which sets in the work. He is interpreting this characteristic of the artworks through Van Gogh’s painting of the peasant’s shoes. The artwork does not expose the shoes as aesthetic objects or a beautiful pair of shoes.<sup>29</sup> The shoes in the painting appear as no longer reliable as equipment. The shoes in the artwork are not in a great condition; they appear wrecked. Which reveals whoever used them might have been a hard working person or someone who had tough living conditions. The artwork discloses the true being of the shoes (the essences of the shoes), therefore a true revealing. Heidegger puts it in this way: “In the work of art the truth of beings has set itself to work. ‘To set’ means here ‘to bring to stand’. Some particular being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes in the work to stand in the light of its Being. The Being of beings comes into the steadiness of its shining”.<sup>30</sup>

The truth reveals and shines in works of art, nevertheless the truth is not immortal, but contextual.<sup>31</sup> Moreover Heidegger explains further and tells us that does not mean the truth portrayed in the Van Gogh’s painting. But the art is a work revealing the truth by being itself. Another example Heidegger appeals to is the ruins of a Greek temple; the temple does not portray the Gods, but rather it portrays a holy place in and around itself. The temple (as holy place) structure holds in place specific socialised interpretation of birth and death, catastrophe and blessing, defeat and honour, strength and failure.<sup>32</sup> The temple as a

---

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 102.

<sup>28</sup> Brian Brock, "The Form of the Matter: Heidegger, Ontology and Christian Ethics," *IJST International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 3 (2001): 259.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 102.

<sup>31</sup> Brock, 25.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 259.

space (or building) holds those qualities and reminds those who associate within it. The temple structures have created a spiritual space and hold it into itself. This is in context of human social self-perception<sup>33</sup>, again the temple as an artwork holds and reveals the truth according to Heidegger that:

Truth happens in the temple's standing where it is. This does not mean that something is correctly represented and rendered here, but that beings as a whole are brought into unconcealment and held therein . . . Truth happens in Van Gogh's painting. This does not mean that something at hand is correctly portrayed, but rather than in the revelation of the equipmental being of the shoes beings as a whole- world and earth in their counterplay- attain to unconcealment.<sup>34</sup>

This defines the role of art as a work unlike other work. It creates a new world and then reveals itself in its being.

## **6. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER ONE**

This chapter has defined the theoretical background and its significance as one of the foundations of this project. The explanation of theory proposed here is useful, a working definition that can help me to contextualise these thoughts as artworks. These thoughts provide the basis for opening up my understanding of the area. It helps me to understand how to employ and reconcile both theories of Mulla Sadra as a Persian philosopher and Heidegger as a German philosopher in the production of the project. The next chapter discusses and highlights my application of these ideas in the construction of artworks. From my readings I have put these ideas to work in a way to create artworks that manifest change as materiality and form.

These ideas have informed my choice and study of the works of selective artists, (my community of practice) and how these artists have imbedded those ideas into the works of art in context of socio-political issues. This will be addressed in the next section.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 181.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **THINKING THROUGH PRACTICE: MATERIAL, FORM, MEDIUM, EXPERIENCE AND PROCESS OF MAKING**

#### **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO**

##### **2.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TWO**

##### **2.2. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

##### **2.3. DORIS SALCEDO**

##### **2.4. HIWA K**

##### **2.5. MONA HATOUM**

##### **2.6. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS**

##### **2.7. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER TWO**

##### **2.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TWO**

This chapter contains two key sections; the first section focuses upon my community of practice, and the last section briefly addresses recent social and political history of Kurdistan relevant to understanding the context of this research.

##### **2.2. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

The study of my community of practice considers a number of contemporary artists who use a range of media and understanding of materiality to address socio-political issues in their artwork.

In this section of the dissertation I will explore and examine the work of Doris Salcedo, Hiwa K and Mona Hatoum, in light of the following content:

- 1. DORIS SALCEDO:** Mutated domestic objects (dysfunctional) and commonplace materials in the context of violence.
- 2. HIWA K:** Materiality and form, through their historical associations with politics and war.
- 3. MONA HATOUM:** Questioning, through transformed objects into uncanny and unsettling objects.

### 2.3. DORIS SALCEDO

This section focuses on Doris Salcedo's works titled *Untitled* and *Unland*, where she has utilised everyday domestic and personal items, and through working processes has transformed them into dysfunctional objects, in order to address the violence and traumatic history of socio-political issues of modern-day Colombia.

#### **"MUTATED DOMESTIC OBJECTS" (UNWORKABLE) AND COMMONPLACE MATERIALS IN THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE**

Doris Salcedo (b. 1958, Bogota, Colombia) works with sculpture, installation and public art to explore the contradictory notions of loss pain, trauma and remembrance of the communal scars of a society that has encountered violent conflict. While her work is based on the traumatic history of socio-political issues of modern-day Colombia, and the effects of ongoing civil war on the Columbian people, the notion of "otherness" has a great place in Salcedo's work. As Julie Rodrigues Widholm remarks: "Given the difficult conditions of life for the vast majority of the human population, one imagines this invitation could be extended outside of Colombia to other subjugated regions. Thus, Salcedo's works serve as a catalyst for dynamic internal reflection and public dialogue about trauma and suffering in many times and places".<sup>35</sup>

Salcedo's sculptural work and installations often utilise everyday domestic and personal items like furniture (chairs, cabinets, tables, wardrobes, beds, etc.), textiles and clothing. These materials are brought together and transformed into unworkable and uncommon objects that address loss, pain, grief, absence and the importance of remembrance and mourning in the face of political violence.

In addition the process of transfers object has taken place by the acts of deforming, re-forming and reassembling into new forms and shapes. The outcome of the process is that the objects have been permanently changed—they will never return to any of the uses of the original, and cannot function as ordinary commonplace objects any longer. Rod Megham states: "If for Plato a table is only ever a poor substitute for an ideal form, while for Bergson it represents a perceptual challenge to the constantly changing subject, for Salcedo it is a cultural document - and if it is hybridised, a document that bears witness to trauma".<sup>36</sup>

Through the process of deforming and reforming the objects, the purposes and meanings change and they turn into paradoxical objects that which are loaded with absence and calamity.

---

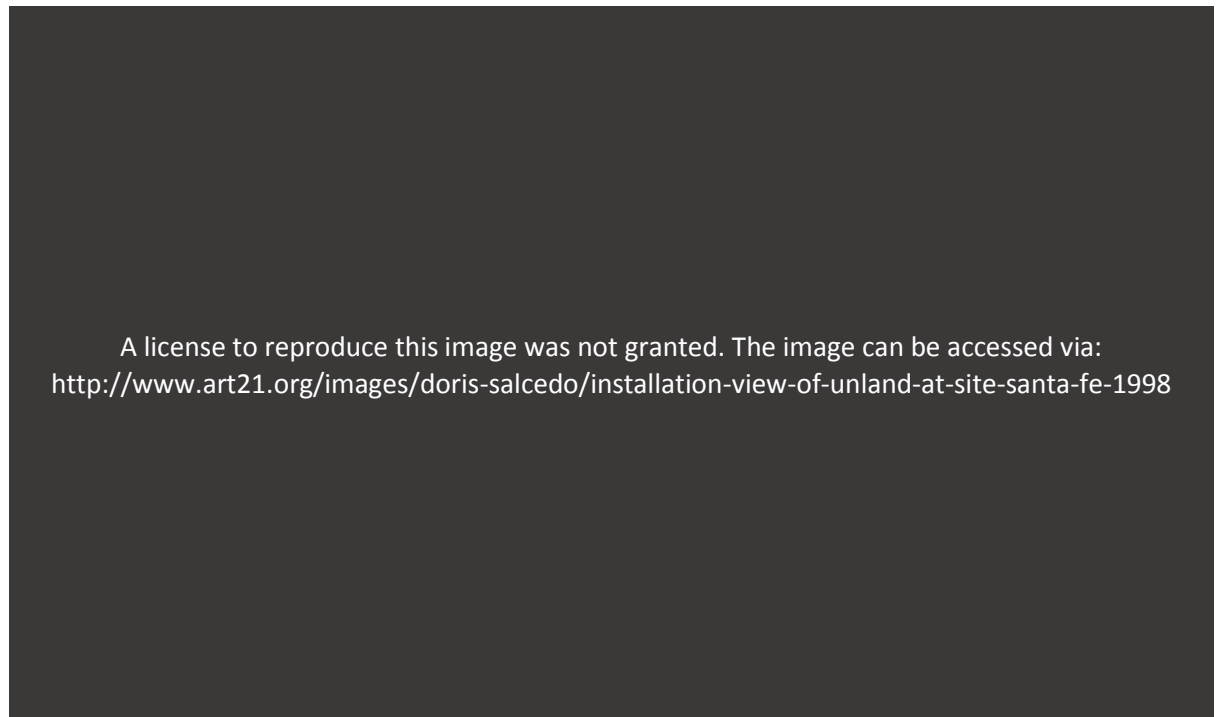
<sup>35</sup> Julie Rodrigues Widholm Doris Salcedo, Madeleine Grynsztejn, *Doris Salcedo* (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Doris Salcedo and Cube White, *Doris Salcedo : Neither* (London: White Cube, 2004).

### **UNLAND (1995-1998)**

In her series of work *Unland* (1995-1998) Salcedo employs common domestic objects, furniture (tables) and organic materials (human hair) to create evocative works that address a great upheaval resulting from political oppression and violent social contexts. *Unland* comprises of three works: *Unland: The Orphan's Tunic*, *Unland: Irreversible Witness*, and *Unland: Audible in the Mouth*. The work was inspired by Salcedo's interviews with orphaned children in northern Colombia who had witnessed the murder of their parents and family members and encountered the sorrow and suffering of absence of those who were killed. *Unland* consists of three parts, each part is made of the halves of two kitchen tables of different sizes fused together to create an extended and uncommon form.

The kitchen table is a common object in every household and marks a place of family gathering. This gathering has been disturbed, as the children's parents are no longer there. The family can no longer gather together—as a result of political violence, the children are alone, living in the presence of the absence. Salcedo has expressed this poetically in the act of cutting into the tables—and reassembling them into another type of table; it references the disturbance of the family. By using the object of the table, she doesn't address this story literally but rather poetically.



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://www.art21.org/images/doris-salcedo/installation-view-of-unland-at-site-santa-fe-1998>

Figure 3. Doris Salcedo, *Unland*, 1995- 1998, installation view:

Foreground, *Unland: The Orphan's Tunic*, 1997, (Collection, Fundacio 'La Caixa', Barcelona), wood, cloth, hair, 80 x 245 x 98 cm.

Background, left, *Unland: Audible In The Mouth*, 1998, (Collection, Tate Gallery, London), wood, thread, hair, 74.5 x 315 x 80 cm.

Background right, *Unland: Irreversible Witness*, 1995-98, (Collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), wood, cloth, metal, hair, 112 x 249 x 89 cm.

Through the considered and slow processes of making, the tables have changed into disturbing unworkable objects. By doing so, the objects (tables) have turned into references and witnesses of missing victims of political trauma of violence. This work deals with the notion of how to overcome traumatic conditions from the different perspective of the victims. Dan Cameron writes: “On the one hand, *Unland* opens the door to a terrible beauty; on the other it helps to pave the way towards our coming to terms with those millions of humble individuals who confront the unendurable every day of their lives, and miraculously prevail”.<sup>37</sup> He has referred to *Unland* as “memory sculptures”.

In addition, Salcedo drilled thousands of tiny holes into the surface of the tables, and wove human hair and silk into the holes. Human hair is used to further express the presence of absence. The material’s vocabulary and form of objects (tables) have played a significant role in both the content and context of the work, in particular the conceptual, historical, geographical and graphical generators of the work. The dismantled objects (tables) and organic materials (hairs and silk) embrace the violent context.

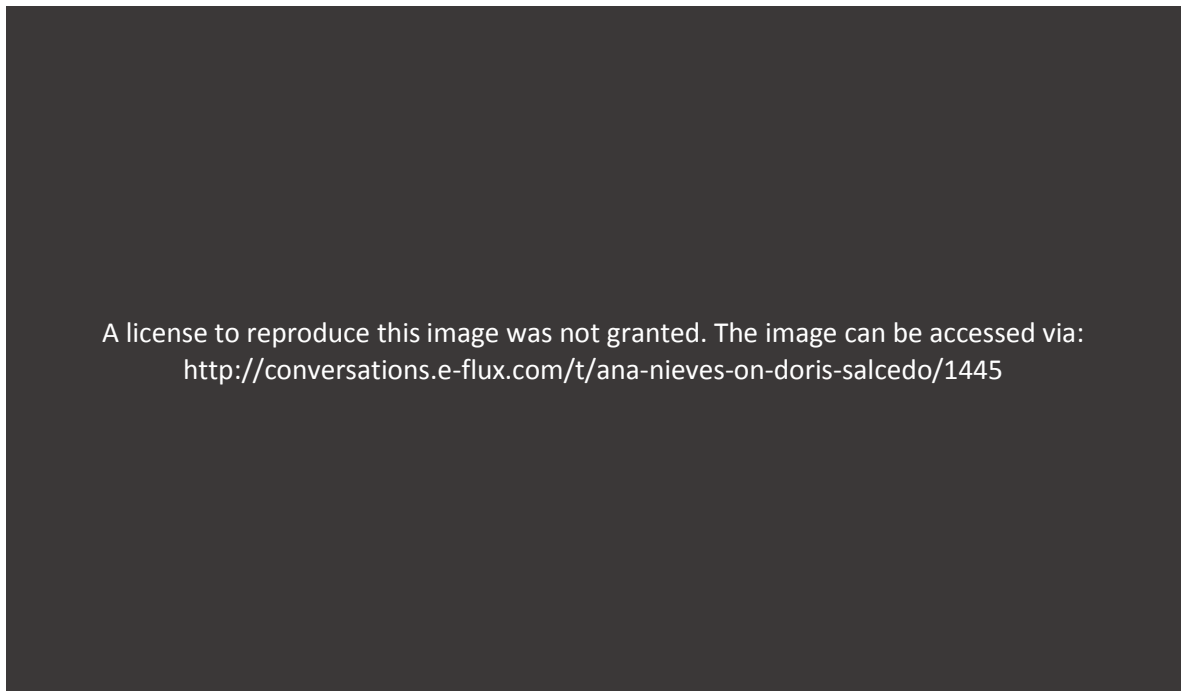


Figure 4. Doris Salcedo, *Unland: The Orphan's Tunic*, (detail), (Collection, Fundacio 'La Caixa', Barcelona), 1995-1998, wood, cloth, hair, 80 x 245 x 98 cm.

The work (as thing) has a significant state of being that reveals the “truth”<sup>38</sup>. In this regard Heidegger stated: “In the work of art the truth of being has set itself to work. ‘To set’ means here ‘to bring to stand.’ Some particular being.”<sup>39</sup> For further details please see Chapter One.

---

<sup>37</sup> Doris Salcedo et al., *Doris Salcedo* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 12.

<sup>38</sup> Heidegger and Krell, 102.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



Salcedo has brought to stand poetically the truthfulness of political violence, throughout the material vocabulary and form conditions. She has brought together materials significantly in artwork to indicate a meaningful act, which confronts the acceptance of responsibility and telling of truth being. She stated:

I work with materials that are already charged with significance, with a meaning they have acquired in the practice of everyday life. Used materials are profoundly human; they all bespeak the presence of a human being ... The handling of materials in each piece is the result of a specific act, related to the event I am working on. It is an act of everyday life that gives shape to the piece. In some cases it is a hopeless act of mourning.<sup>40</sup>

For Salcedo, the use of particular materials to express the context of violence and turmoil is inspired by the work of German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-86) and his notion of “social sculpture”, which generate dialogue with political awareness or participating social thinking through the work of art. In this regard, in the interview with Carlos Basildon, Salcedo mentioned:

I was enthusiastic about both. Encountering his work revealed to me the concept of “social sculpture”, the possibility of giving form to society through art. I became passionately drawn to creating that form, which led me to find sculpture meaningful, because merely handling material was meaningless to me. Placing a small object on a base seemed completely vacuous. That is why Beuys was so important to me. I found the possibility of integrating my political awareness with sculpture. I discovered how materials have the capacity to convey specific meanings.<sup>41</sup>

This reveals her intention to integrate the meaning of materiality with the process of making in order to generate political awareness. Compassion is the core element of Salcedo’s works. She says about the work *Unland* (1995-98):

[In this work] what I tried to do was to transform materials to the point where they are no longer metaphors but metamorphose into something else quite human and quite delicate—to talk of the fragility of human life and also the brutality of power. In order to do that I wanted to make a surface that was incredibly delicate and fragile, that can literally be destroyed if you just pull a little bit of the fabric that covers it. It’s unbelievably fragile. And I think that would generate the idea of fear and compassion as the human response to a tragic event.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Doris Salcedo et al., *Doris Salcedo* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 21-3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Sollins et al., *Art 21: Art in the Twenty-First Century 5* (New York: Art21, Inc., 2009).

Salcedo created the work with compassion, consideration and respect for the victims. *Unland* asserts the gesture of healing and redemption in rough environments where the remembrance of a loved one is fated into the forgotten.

### **UNTITLED (1990s - ONGOING PROJECT)**

In the 1990s Salcedo made a series of sculptures *Untitled*, whereby she combined different pieces of furniture (wardrobes, chairs, bed frames, tables and other items) with poured concrete. Salcedo has explored various visual variations of this concrete-filled household wooden furniture, some of which were found in antique shops, and others donated by family members of the victims. In the case of the latter, these domestic objects are material evidence of those who are absent.

Salcedo transformed these objects through the use of concrete (cement) as a material. By filling the crevices of the furniture with cement, these utilitarian pieces lose their function. They become illustrations of the violent and brutal acts that disrupted the domestic environment and evoke silence and the remains of people who are no longer alive. In this regard Andreas Huyssen says:

*Untitled (Armoire)* is part of a series in which Salcedo buried domestic furniture and other personal objects in cement, stripping these utilitarian pieces of their functions and turning them into humble monuments to their lost, silenced, or forgotten owners. The artist explained, "There was one widow...who told me how difficult it was to continue living with objects that are reminders of her husband.... Every day you sit at the dining table and the empty chair is there, screaming the absence of that person. It can become a very difficult object to live with. So I tried to make those objects silent, encasing them in cement."<sup>43</sup>

The *Untitled* series appears fragile and human. Salcedo has created the work with a poetic sensibility and delicacy through the surface and fine treatment of details. She indicates that the objects (wardrobes, chairs, etc.) have an association and history of relationships with daily objects used in the home environment.

---

<sup>43</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts : Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://feedspeak.tumblr.com/post/130561127555/the-guggenheim-is-having-a-major-retrospective>

Figure 5. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, 1990s – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel, installation view.

### **UNTITLED: CONCRETE IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION**

Salcedo has used concrete (cement) as one of the main materials in several of her works. She has utilised it in different ways in her sculptural assemblages to deform, reform and articulate the treatment of surface by filling the empty spaces of domestic furniture and so on.

Salcedo in response to the troubled socio-political situation of Colombia has used sculptures and installation as metaphors to address the issues of violence and loss. As Salcedo explains, “What I’m addressing in the work is something that is actually in the process of vanishing...a half-present reality. You never manage to perceive it as something concrete; you never manage to grasp it”.<sup>44</sup>

In the work *Untitled* psychological readings of material quality of concrete (cement) are an essential part of the work. Cement has certain qualities; it is fragile, formidable, heavy, fixed, solid, mute and cold. These material qualities of concrete reflect and evoke political violent expression.

---

<sup>44</sup> Salcedo et al., 26.

Through the use of specific material (concrete) and its effect, Salcedo manipulated and transformed the objects, which demonstrate the experience of loss and damage. For instance, she has filled the empty spaces of wardrobes, dressers and beds with concrete. She has also embedded chairs in block cement. By changing these items into solid forms, she has made them dysfunctional household objects.<sup>45</sup> However the objects are firm assemblages that aim to give presence to the victims who have disappeared or been silenced by fear, resulting in the objects have created the sense of abandonment. In this work the material quality of concrete has provided solid form, the concrete technically has provided solid support to combine several pieces as well as individual pieces. Edward Bacal says, "it permits tenuous constructions to remain in place, giving them the structural strength to maintain extreme states – to push at the physical borders of objects and materials – and to thereby retain a sense of precariousness within its structural resilience".<sup>46</sup>

Salcedo has manipulated the forms and surfaces of these household objects deliberately. In order to signify the meaning of intimate traces of physical use embedded within these objects. In addition she has employed vocabulary of material (concrete) to explore physicality conditions of concrete such as heavy, tangible, firm, cold, mute, which signify the context of the work. In this regards Edward Bacal stated:

Concrete surfaces appear impersonal, cold and synthetic. To be sure, Salcedo makes no effort to hide this character, for one of the main effects of her use of concrete is to accentuate the material quality of her works. This effect is particularly significant vis-à-vis the implied presence of the body in these sculptures, but as removed from physical matter, leaving only the immaterial trace of a disappearance. Indeed, concrete lends tangibility and weight to objects that, in dredging the traces of disappeared bodies, embody a certain immateriality.<sup>47</sup>

Salcedo has employed concrete, foregrounding its material physicality as an essential element, which is situated in the work as non-representational or non-figurative sculptures.

The use of concreteness in the work suggests that the domestic objects (things) appeared as both dysfunction forms and objects. In the work, the forms of the domestic objects highlight the elemental qualities of concrete. The domestic objects in the work *Untitled* have lost

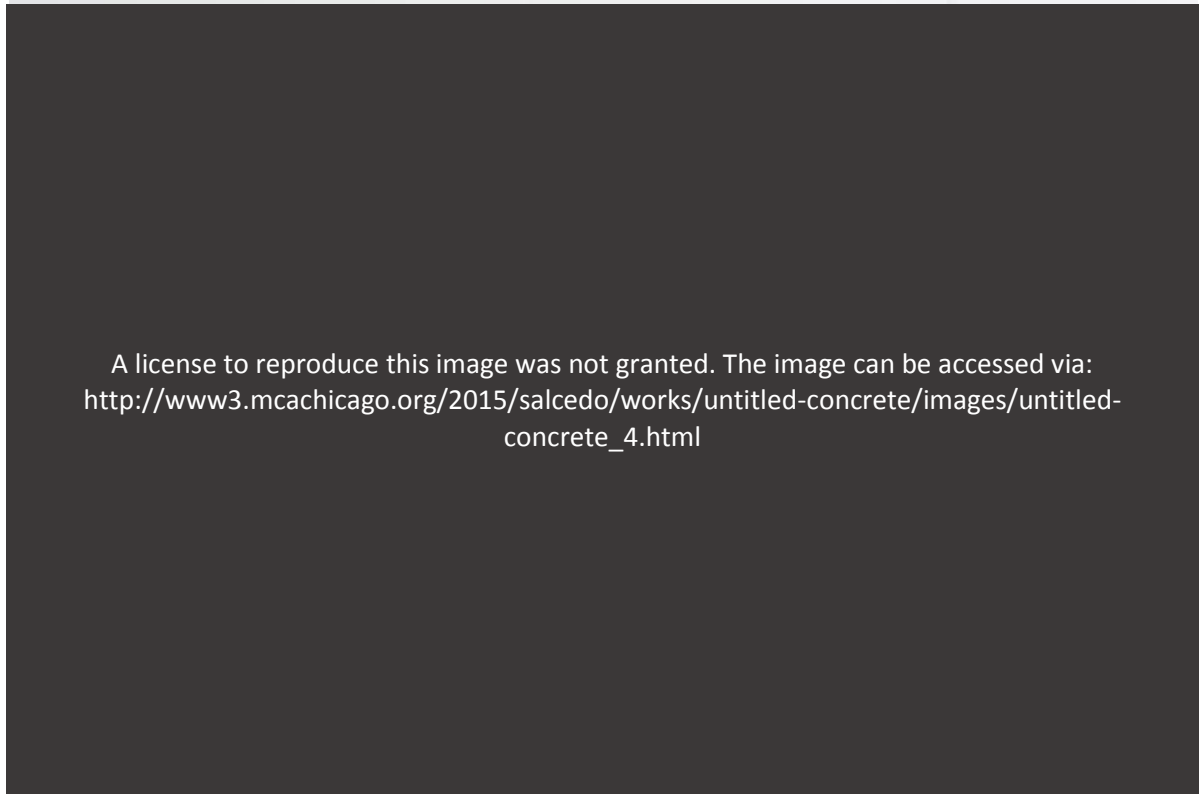
---

<sup>45</sup> By way of comparison, a brief study of the work of British artist Rachel Whiteread reveals how her works reference or evoke the context of absence and memory. She has used cement and object differently to Salcedo. Through the process of casting the spaces around the object, and removing the object from the casted material, this process results in the negative space of object (invisible), it becomes a positive form (present). In other words her work has emphasised the negative space of object, through the process of casting and revealing the space of object rather than object. Her work deals with the notion of converting absent (negative space of object) into some sort of uncanny form (present). As a result the object is absent. This is in contrast to Salcedo's works, where the object has a great presence in the work but the empty spaces surrounding it has been filled with cement.

<sup>46</sup> Edward Bacal, "The Concrete and the Abstract: On Doris Salcedo, Teresa Margolles and Santiago Sierra's Tenuous Bodies," *Parallax* 21, no. 3 (2015): 262.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 263.

their original forms and values; they generate a great stillness. This transformation has occurred through the processes of making. In other words, the work employs the quality of concrete to reference the immobility, the static fixed heavy quality not only at its materiality but also of the oppressive nature of socio-political violence.



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
[http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-concrete/images/untitled-concrete\\_4.html](http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-concrete/images/untitled-concrete_4.html)

Figure 6. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, (Collection, Art Institute of Chicago), 1992 – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel, 130 x 214 x 58 cm.

A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image  
can be accessed via:  
[http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-  
concrete/](http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-concrete/)

Figure 7. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, (detail), 1990s – ongoing project, wood, concrete, steel.

A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image  
can be accessed via:  
[http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-  
concrete/images/untitled-concrete\\_11.html](http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/untitled-concrete/images/untitled-concrete_11.html)

Figure 8. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, (detail), 1990s – ongoing project, wood, cloth, concrete, steel.

## 2.4. HIWA K

This section focuses on Hiwa K's work project entitled *The Bell* (2007-2015). Hiwa K employs the vocabulary and form of materials as essential elements. It places them within the context of the geo-political political conflicts of the history of Kurdistan, Iraq and the Middle East.

### **MATERIALITY AND FORM, THROUGH THEIR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CONFLICT AND POLITICS**

Hiwa K is one of the most significant new generation Kurdish artists (Kurdistan-Iraq) of our recent times. Born in Sulaimani, Kurdistan in 1975, he left Kurdistan in 1994 for Europe as a refugee and settled in Berlin, Germany, where he continues to live and work.

His unique artistic practice offers a distinctive vision of the recent complex history of Kurdistan, Iraq and the Middle East. He also indirectly highlights the impact that the West has on the ongoing geo-political conflict in the region. Hiwa K use a multi-disciplinary approach to art practice that reflects a fresh and new way of working in comparison to traditional Kurdish and Iraqi art.

Hiwa K employs a wide range of media including installations, sculpture, video and performance to address his subject matter—the body, power structures, political events and authoritarian control.

His work questions the harsh reality of the human condition in relation to social-political contexts, in connection to Kurdistan-Iraq. Both places have been through great disruption, war, violence, racial and social injustice, and more recently the war against Islamic State (ISIS or DAESH). Nevertheless his work addresses the notion of responsibility and ethics but in a highly poetic way, questioning the gestures of socio-geopolitical history as a place of aggression.

This research study investigates Hiwa K's practice and how he manipulates materials. It focuses on his latest project titled *The Bell* (2007-2015), which was exhibited at the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale 2015.

*The Bell* involves a double screen video featuring interviews as well as an actual bronze bell on a base. The video serves a documentary function; one of the channels features the artist's encounter with a Kurdish entrepreneur, Nazhad, in the setting of his foundry in Kurdistan. Nazhad built his wealth from buying metal war waste from the authorities (American, Kurdish and Iraqi governments), melting it down and exporting the cast cubes to Asia and Eastern Europe.

In an interview conducted with Hiwa K, he states how since 2007, he has collaborated with Nazhad—who is a source for his projects. "Nazhad oversees the trade of the munitions. He

is an entrepreneur who makes all his money out of these munitions, but he is also an archive of sorts".<sup>48</sup>

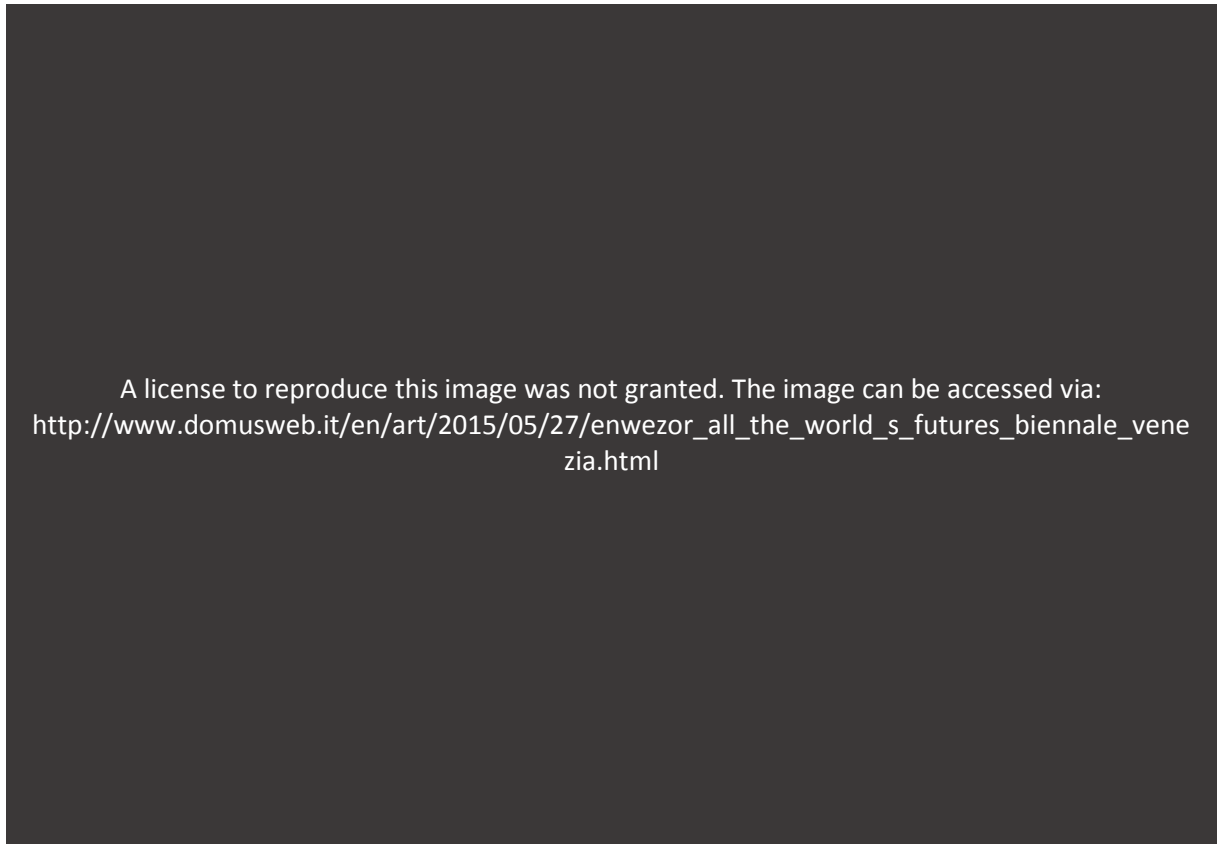


Figure 9. Hiwa K, *The Bell*, the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, double screen video and bronze bell on a base, installation view.

In the video, Nazhad takes us through the factory and explains “where the munitions come from, what countries were involved in supplying them and what each material is called”. Through his extensive knowledge of the history of conflict in the region and of warfare trade, it is revealed that those countries that have sold weapons, have in fact sold them to both sides of the conflict. Their agenda is clear; keeping conflict ongoing will afford financial profits for the weapon manufactures.

In the second channel, the bell is being produced, the raw material is being melted down to form 300 kg of copper and tin and then transported by ship to a foundry in Milan that has been making bells since the thirteenth century.

The project itself is a sort of archive; it contains so many layers about warfare material, history of conflicts, communal memory, revised history and the relationship between east

---

<sup>48</sup> Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf, "Performative Resonances; Hiwa K in Conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf," *Ibraaz*, accessed 6.10.2015, 2015. <http://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/171>.



and west and so on. The act of melting the materials for the construction of the bell is a metaphor for all these layers.

### **HISTORY OF OBJECTS: (MATERIALITY, FORM, AND TRANSFORMATION) FROM BELL TO WEAPON / FROM WEAPON TO BELL**

Through this project, Hiwa K has used objects that have an inherent strong position within the history of war and violence. Wasted weapons as objects provide direct evidence of disruption that has existed. These objects (wasted weapons) are loaded and tinged with the presence of turmoil.

Throughout history in the west, during wars and conflicts church bells were melted in order to create cannons.<sup>49</sup> In an interview with *The Art Newspaper* Hiwa K said, "The West was busy at the time of wars melting bells into cannons. So there is nothing special about the idea; I just reversed it".<sup>50</sup>

The form and materiality of waste melted weapons have historical connections that signify violence, creating an additional layer of meaning to the project. Hiwa K recovered history of wars through materiality and form of objects (weapons) used during conflicts. Hiwa K puts it in this way: "This project has many layers, and also many developed. It is ongoing project, in 2015 I am making the Bell, and the result is very interesting. I would not say the relationship, but I would say affair between cannons and bells. How during the history bells have been melted and then coasted to make cannons".<sup>51</sup>

These historical objects (wasted weapon) are not distinct realms and cannot be just separated from the history of conflict of the region. *The Bell* Project brings the past and the current traumatic political events together (the war against ISIS) through the use of historical iconography.

### **THE BELL AND THE USE OF ICONOGRAPHY**

The Islamic State (ISIS) destroyed and looted ancient artefacts at The Mosul museum in Iraq in 2015. The origins of these artefacts go back to ancient times that date from the Assyrian and Akkadian empires and Mesopotamia's civilisations.<sup>52</sup> Hiwa K has made the decoration of

---

<sup>49</sup> la Biennale di Venezia Channel, "Biennale Arte 2015 - Hiwa K. ", la Biennale di Venezia Channel, accessed March 8, 2015, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prT3Whz0NPY>.

<sup>50</sup> Aliya Say, "Hiwa K: For Whom the Bell Tolls," *The Art Newspaper*, 01 September 2015, 2015 accessed March 24, 2016, <http://theartnewspaper.com/features/hiwa-k-for-whom-the-bell-tolls/>.

<sup>51</sup> Channel, "Biennale Arte 2015 - Hiwa K."

<sup>52</sup> Kareem Shaheen, "Isis Fighters Destroy Ancient Artefacts at Mosul Museum," *The Guardian*, Friday 27 February, 2015, accessed 9 April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/26/isis-fighters-destroy-ancient-artefacts-mosul-museum-iraq>.

*The Bell* from the symbols and images (iconographies) of these artefacts. In this regards, Hiwa K mentions in an interview with Anthony Downey, “The decoration on the bell includes an artefact that was broken in the museum in Mosul. I took the images of the sculpture and gave it to a wax master to make so as to produce a clay mould. We have no proof that the other artefacts, such as the tigers and the armies, have been broken but they are all threatened and are still in danger of being destroyed”.<sup>53</sup>

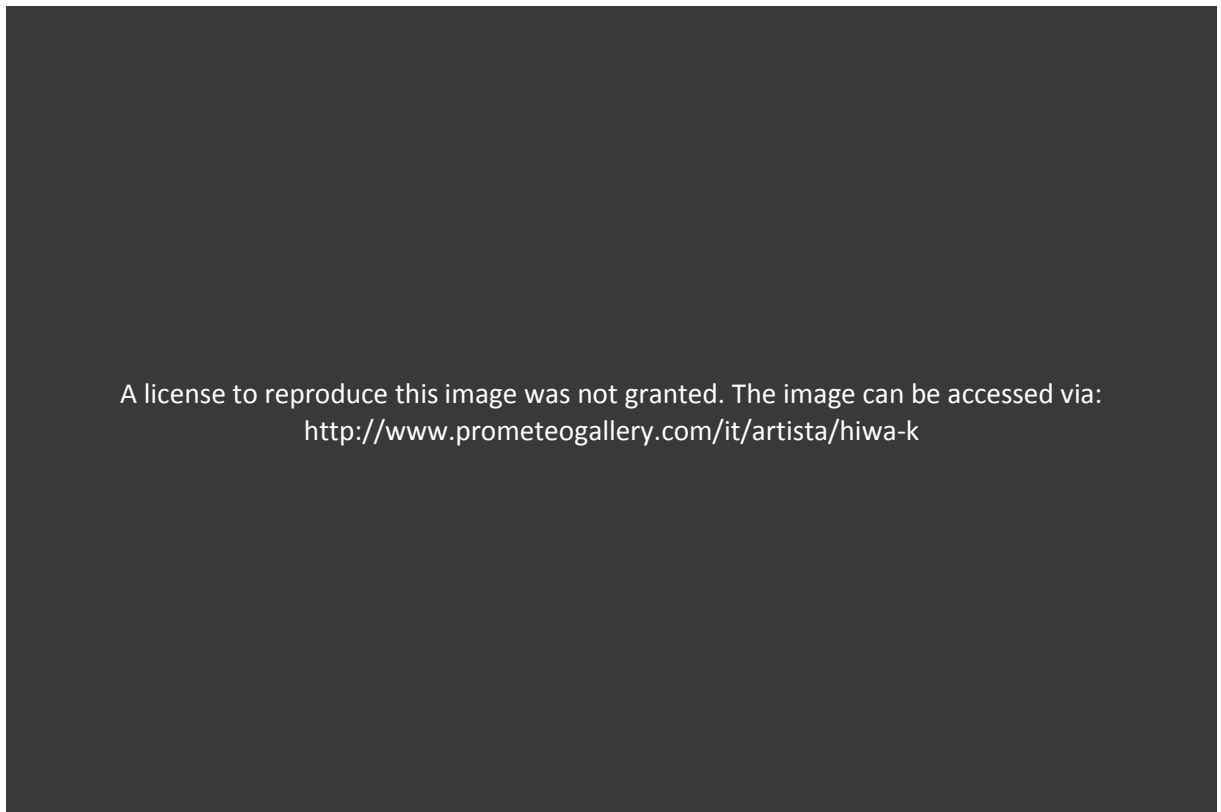


Figure 10. Hiwa K, *The Bell*, (iconography details), the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, bronze bell on a base.

At the beginning of the project Hiwa K did not intend to use these historical iconographies. It was accidental and emerged during the process of working. The work has recorded and accumulated the destruction of statues and artefacts that is the core of context and content of the work. Hiwa K discusses this aspect in the same interview:

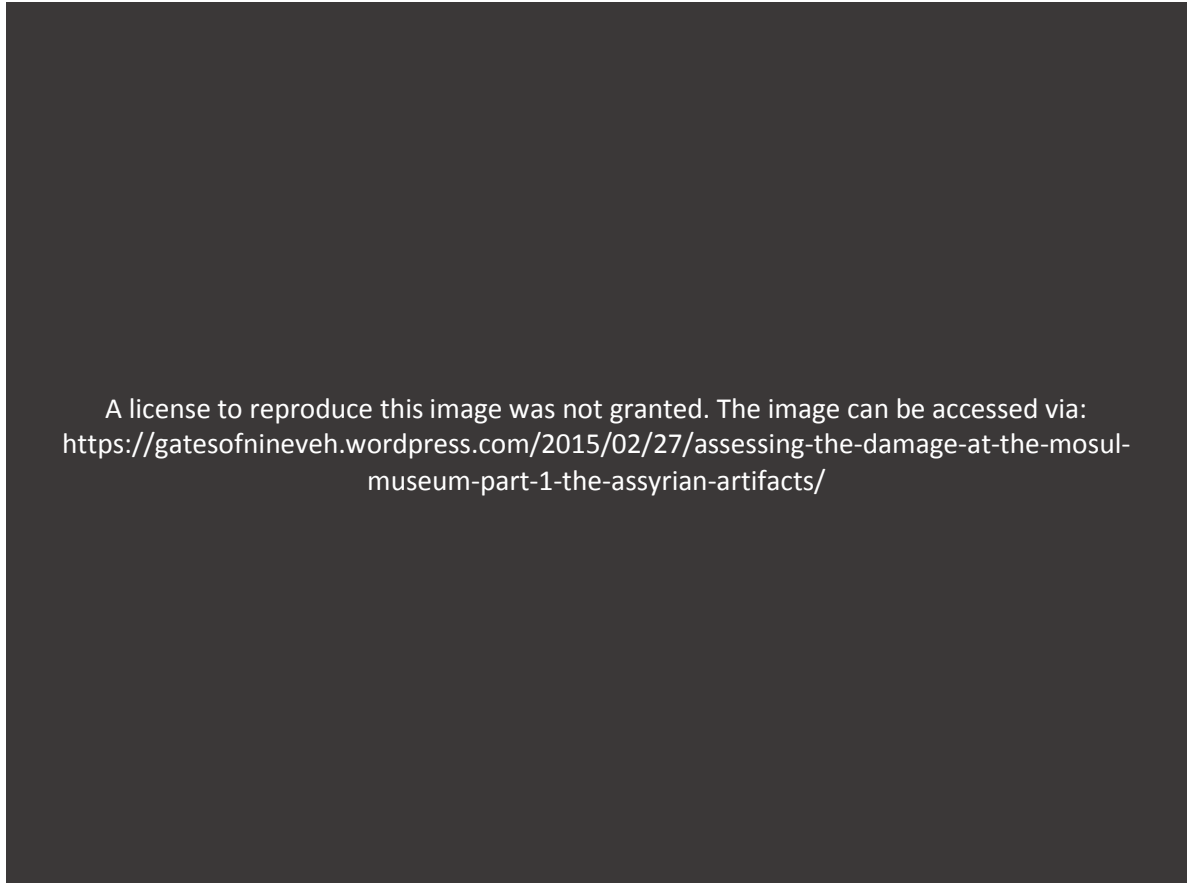
It was not my intention, but this project is very rounded - all the elements are connected by accident. When we were making the bell, ISIS started to break down the artefacts in the Mosul museum. Every bell needs decoration so the people in the foundry asked what I wanted - they had Jesus and Maria and those things because that's what they normally use.

---

<sup>53</sup> Downey and Khalaf, "Performative Resonances; Hiwa K in conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf".

That's when I thought it would be interesting if we could register what was going on in Mosul on the bell".<sup>54</sup>

Again, *The Bell* brings to our consciousness the assumption that the content of the wars are often the same: they bring mass destruction and a great upheaval to humanity. Kino Gabriel, one of the leaders of the Syriac opposition said, "Murder of people and destruction is not enough, so even our civilisation and the culture of our people is being destroyed".<sup>55</sup>



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/2015/02/27/assessing-the-damage-at-the-mosul-museum-part-1-the-assyrian-artifacts/>

Figure 11. Destruction of artefacts and reproductions in Mosul Museum by Islamic State (IS), video still of alleged IS militant defacing ancient artefacts in Mosul Museum, Gates of Nineveh archive.

Hiwa K has employed a diverse range of elements (material vocabulary, form, objects, Iconography and sound) and combined these together in the work. In addition Hiwa K, has emphasised the sound element of the work; it is an essential part of the work, which he

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Shaheen, "Isis fighters destroy ancient artefacts at Mosul museum".

explains in the footnote.<sup>56</sup> He says, “I come from a musical background, so sound continues to be an important element of many of my works”.<sup>57</sup>

However, this research study emphasises the aspects of material vocabulary, form, and political context of the work *The Bell*.

### **MATERIAL VOCABULARY AND FORM OF *THE BELL***

Material vocabulary and form are the core principals of content and context of the project. Hiwa K has used both elements as a key signifier of revealing and questioning the harsh reality of political violence and war in Kurdistan and Iraq. He states, “I am always interested in this kind of organic interaction with materials – how the material starts to give me questions and answers at the same time”.<sup>58</sup>

He employed material and forms that have had direct connection with politics and war. The metal war waste provides truthful evidence and witnesses the difficult reality in Kurdistan and Iraq.

His investigation traces the traumatic history of these conflicts through material vocabulary and form of such objects as wasted warfare weapons, which allows his work to reveal the truth.

According to Martin Heidegger, an artist utilises material (the earth) to create form (the world), (please see Chapter One: 1.5. Earth and World, page 31). In this process of creating the world, an artist reveals the “truth”. In this regards Hiwa K has used melted metal war waste (material; the earth), in order to create a form (of Bell; the world). He reveals the “truth” poetically through the process of making and in addition is challenging and questioning the socio-geopolitical history of Kurdistan and Iraq.

Objects (wasted weapons) belong to the history of conflicts; they establish means in collective and political memory of the people and their society. These objects had become

---

<sup>56</sup> “If you studied music theory you will be familiar with the notion of vertical intervals in simultaneously sounding tones, such as a bell’s chord, and horizontal intervals in successively sounding tones, such as a melody. As melted metal is cast into the bell, the melody turns into the chord. So for me *The Bell* represents a rather beautiful alloy between the verticality of the intervals in the bell’s chord and the horizontality of the intervals in the melody of melted metal; between the statement of the object standing upright in the present moment, and time unfolding as the object melts away; and equally, between grieving, voiceless Echo (the numbed people represented by the mute, motionless bell) and self-obsessed Narcissus—the West exporting deadly weapons [Hiwa refers here to a YouTube video he found in which the philosopher Jacques Derrida explains the Echo and Narcissus myth, making a point about all speech being blind]”.

<sup>57</sup> Downey and Khalaf, "Performative Resonances; Hiwa K in conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf".

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

documents of communal memory as well as locations where conflicts occurred. These objects represent communal tragedy society encounters and collective memories of loss and tragedies.

Through the materiality and forms of (wasted weapons) the essential elements and components of the project (*The Bell*) are situated to refer to the wars conflicts by using melted wasted weapons that were once used for killing and destruction in the new form as a bell. Materiality is a significant element to both different forms as weapon as well as bell. Objects (weapons) are related to violence and death. These are transformed into a form of a bell.

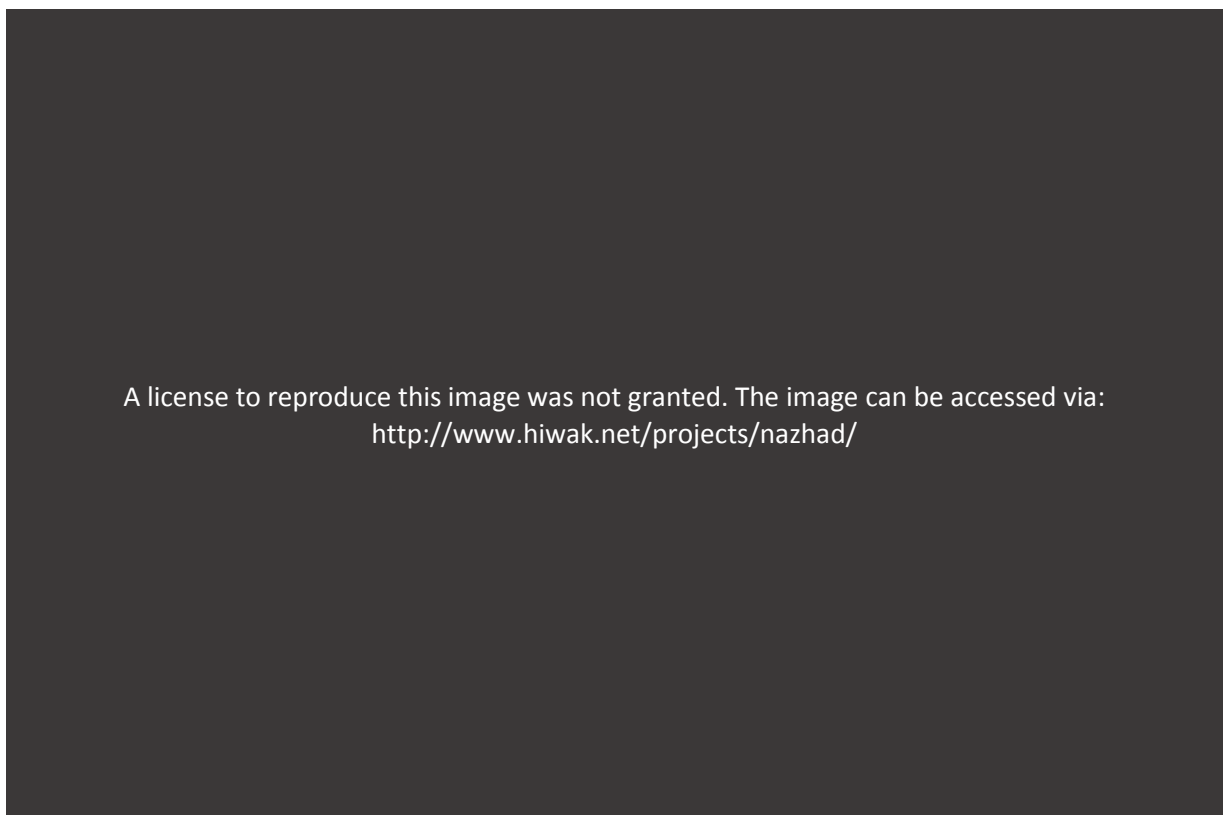


Figure 10. Hiwa K, *The Bell*, the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, (detail) melted wasted weapons, process of casting, still image video.

The work *The Bell* manifests the process of transformation; it demonstrates how the states of the forms have changed from weapons to a bell. Nevertheless the materiality (metal) has not changed; it is still metal in both its forms (as weapons and as bell). This is similar to the forms of conflicts or violence; the conflicts might be different, but the core outcomes are the same as destruction and horror.

This transformative use of materials has links with my project.

The fact that the project was created in the same period of recent history gives an indication of how conflicts have been used as vehicles of consumption of all sorts of military weapons. The project evokes to the modes of circling conflicts that are generated by a global political agenda at work in the region. The ongoing and circling conflicts have benefited the global weapon manufacturing companies. Hiwa K says, "What we call ISIS is what we would describe as 'evil' but I also wanted to uncover this thing that we call 'ISIS' ... So I was thinking about the whole market of metal and weapons and how ISIS are included in that trade, especially in the looting and trade of artefacts".<sup>59</sup>

*The Bell* evokes the dreadfulness of conflict and violence. Through this work Hiwa K wants to question this in order to make sense of the nonsensical world.

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

## 2.5. MONA HATOUM

### **MONA HATOUM: QUESTIONING: THROUGH TRANSFORMED OBJECTS INTO UNCANNY AND UNSETTLING OBJECTS**

This section explores how Hatoum has employed a diverse range of media to address the concepts of home, exile and dislocation. Here I discuss how she creates uncanny forms and readings through the use and understanding of her material vocabulary in relation to these concepts.

### **QUESTIONING: TRANSFORMED OBJECTS INTO UNCANNY AND UNSETTLING OBJECTS**

Born in 1952 in Lebanon to Palestinian parents, Hatoum grew up with a sense of not belonging.

She was 23 when she visited London in 1975. The civil war broke out in Lebanon, and Hatoum was unable to return home. It was almost a decade before she saw her family again. London has since become her base, but she travels constantly, "I think best on the move,"<sup>60</sup> Hatoum says, describing herself as a nomad who feels both "at home and alien at any place".<sup>61</sup> She now lives and works between London and Berlin.

Hatoum has faced and experienced socio-political difficulties through her life. These experiences have informed her works. She employs a range of media including sculpture, installation, performance, video and photography.

Her early practice included performance art but she has gradually moved towards the use of sculpture and the use of found objects, which have led on to the construction of large-scale installations. Throughout her practice, Hatoum addresses issues such as home, exile, control, authority, dislocation, power structures, refugee status, conflicts and domestic turmoil.

These issues have been addressed through the process of making; she has manipulated and transformed familiar objects such as kitchen utensils, scarves, beds and chairs into contradictory, dysfunctional or uncanny objects. In some of her works objects are transformed from the mundane, into extraordinary disturbing, dreadful and paradoxically beautiful forms. They have often been enlarged to such gigantic sizes, so that they could no longer function as familiar objects. Hatoum explains, "You can't take things for granted. You

---

<sup>60</sup> "Making the Ordinary Anything But. Mona Hatoum Transforms Domestic Objects into Unsettling Sculptures That Hit Viewers in the Gut," *ARTnews* 104, no. 5 (2005).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

have to look behind the surface. I want people to have a gut reaction to the work first, and after that initial experience, they can start to think about what it might mean".<sup>62</sup>

Hatoum's objective is to create questions around these above issues rather than to give answers. This approach has become an essential element of her work, and has been addressed in different ways that are both confronting and poetic. The context of Hatoum's work has gone beyond political geographies, border limitations and political agendas. In a 1996 interview with Claudia Spinelli, Hatoum said:

There isn't a conscious effort on my part to speak directly about my background and history, [...] But the fact that I grew up in a war-torn country the fact that my family was displaced, a Palestinian family that ended up living in exile in Lebanon, has obviously shaped the way I perceive the world. It comes into my work as a feeling of unsettledness. The feeling of not being able to take anything for granted, even doubting the solidity of the ground you walk on.<sup>63</sup>

Her artwork resonates and evokes feelings and a sense of compassion in context of human suffering. From this point she has worked to highlight the socio-political complex situations, in order to question the disturbing everyday events and experience around the globe.

### **VIOLENCE AND PARADOXICAL BEAUTY: THE NOTION OF HOME, EXILE AND DISLOCATION THROUGH MATERIALITY AND FORM**

Palestinian literary theoretician, Edward Said states: "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted [...]. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind for ever".<sup>64</sup>

Hatoum faced exile twice and was literally displaced, first in Lebanon, and then later in Europe. This experience has not only been physical, but also geographical and cultural in the same way that every other dislocated person has faced.

Hatoum has given a greater insight into the notion of dislocation or displacement, signifying this with an individual visual vocabulary. Through an enormous number of works she has expressed the theme of belonging and non-belonging, questioning the process of shifting

---

<sup>62</sup> Pernilla Holmes, "Making the Ordinary Anything but - Mona Hatoum Transforms Domestic Objects into Unsettling Sculptures That Hit Viewers in the Gut," *ARTnews*. 104, no. 5 (2005): 124-27.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Archer et al., *Mona Hatoum* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.



between both. "...she transforms the pain of her physical exile into the intellectual 'privilege' of seeing things from a 'wider perspective'".<sup>65</sup>

Dislocation is an essential theme for Hatoum. This issue resonates in various ways in her works. Moreover she addresses it by the use of dysfunctional beds, sharp metal carpets, oversized kitchen utensils, knives attached to the handles of an immobile wheelchair etc. Transforming and turning these commonplace objects into uncanny objects, intensifies the notion of homely and unhomely. Edward Said says:

In the age of migrants, curfews, identity cards, refugee, exiles, massacres, camps and fleeing civilians, however, they are the uncooptable mundane instruments of a defiant memory facing itself and its pursuing or oppressing others implacably, marked forever by changes in everyday materials and objects that permit no return or real repatriation, yet unwilling to let go of the past that they carry along with them like some silent catastrophe that goes on and on without fuss or rhetorical bluster.<sup>66</sup>

*Lili (stay) put* (1996), is an early work of Hatoum's. She used a single metal bed frame, which she found in the streets of Jerusalem and displayed it in the gallery, without a mattress. She added wheels to the bed, thereby transforming it from a steady object to an object that is mobile. However, this act was contradicted by her use of fishing wire to attach the bed to the floor using metal hooks.

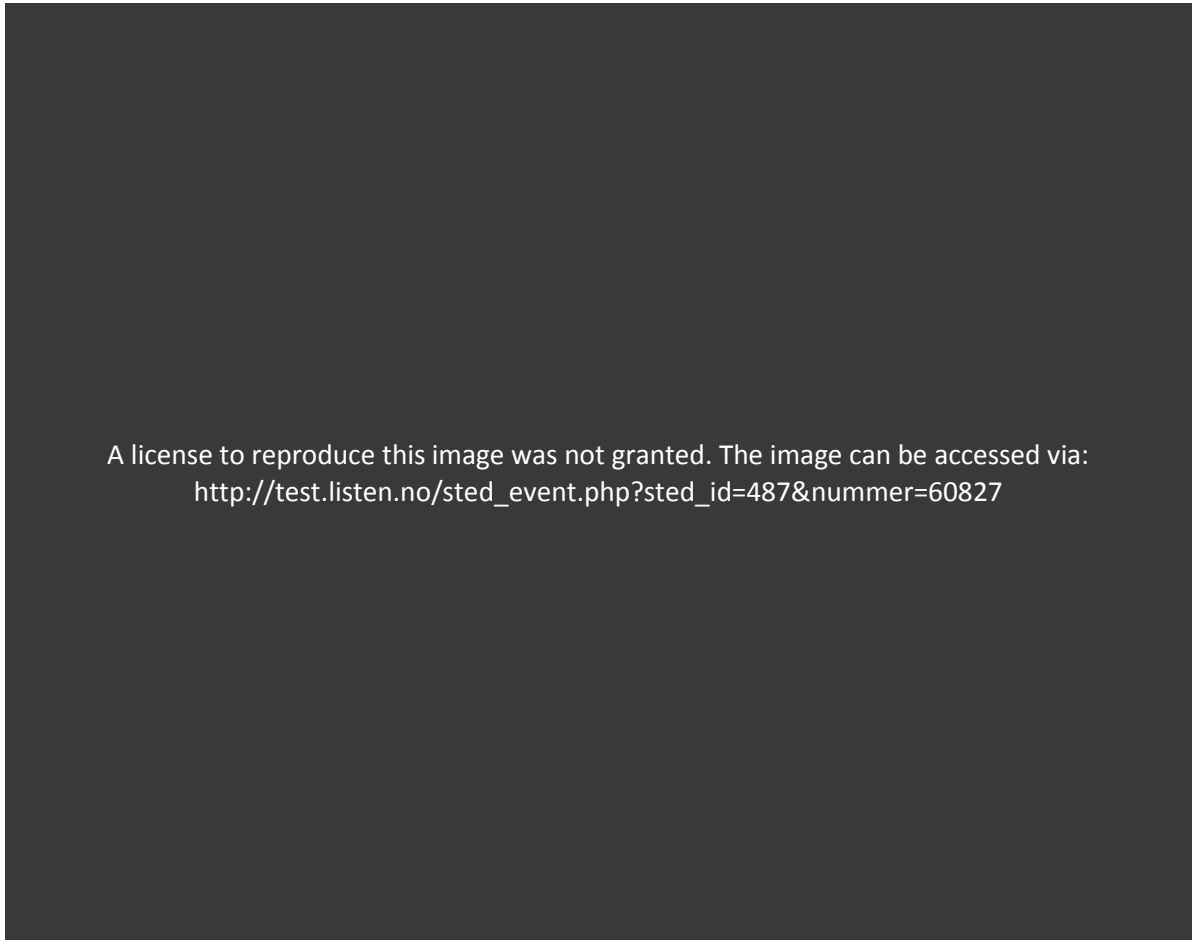
Hatoum in conversation with Michael Archer mentioned, "One visitor said it felt just like their situation, that everything is trying to push them out but invisible threads tie them down. I was impressed that he'd made the connection between an inanimate object and his situation".<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Rehnuma Sazzad, "Hatoum, Said and Foucault: Resistance through Revealing the Power-Knowledge Nexus?," *Postcolonial Text* Vol 4, no. 3 (2008), accessed March 22, 2016, <http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/891/791>.

<sup>66</sup> Mona Hatoum et al., *Mona Hatoum : The Entire World as a Foreign Land* (London: Tate Gallery Pub., 2000), 17.

<sup>67</sup> Archer et al., 28.



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
[http://test.listen.no/sted\\_event.php?sted\\_id=487&nummer=60827](http://test.listen.no/sted_event.php?sted_id=487&nummer=60827)

Figure 13. Mona Hatoum, *Lili (stay) Put*, 1996, metal bed frame, wheels and nylon threads, installation view.

This process of providing mobility to the inanimate object (the bed), and then taking it away again creates a paradox and evokes the theme of conflict between rootedness and displacement. The work signifies the struggle and trauma of displacement without hope, the search for place. In this context Edward Said states, “I found myself reliving the narrative quandaries of my early years, my sense of doubt and of being out of place, of always feeling myself standing in the wrong corner, in a place that seemed to be slipping away from me just as I tried to define or describe it”.<sup>68</sup>

Perhaps that feeling has been described and expressed neatly in Hatoum’s work *Doormat* (1996), where she addresses the state of unwelcoming and the threats of returning home. *Doormat* is made entirely of sharp and wounding stainless steel pins. She humorously plays on the word “Welcome” which can be made out through the sunken pins. The “Welcome” message is doubtful, as pain would be inflicted upon anyone who stepped upon the doormat. Hatoum has changed the original function and quality of the doormat—it can no longer be situated in the context of everyday use.

---

<sup>68</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 558.

Hatoum has used her specific material vocabulary and form as significant elements to address the concept of this work. She has carefully considered her choice of materials. She explains, “I want the meaning to be imbedded in the material that I’m using. I choose the material as an extension of the concept or sometimes in opposition to it, to create a contradictory and paradoxical situation of attraction/repulsion, fascination and revulsion”.<sup>69</sup>

In addition Hatoum has stressed and played on the word “welcome”, questioning the meaning of the word. The physicality of the work seems to contradict the meaning of the word. The work is complex and double edged, Mona Hatoum in the interview described it that way: “It’s related to a series of works I made last year which had to do with shorter pins, so it’s like a little recess within the surface of the mat. From a distance you see the word clearly, but when you get close and you look down at it, the word almost disappears”.<sup>70</sup>

The sense of disappearance and absence are imbedded in *Doormat* visually and physically. It has an ability to surprise and shock, evoking the sense of discomfort associated with fleeing home and the experience of displacement.

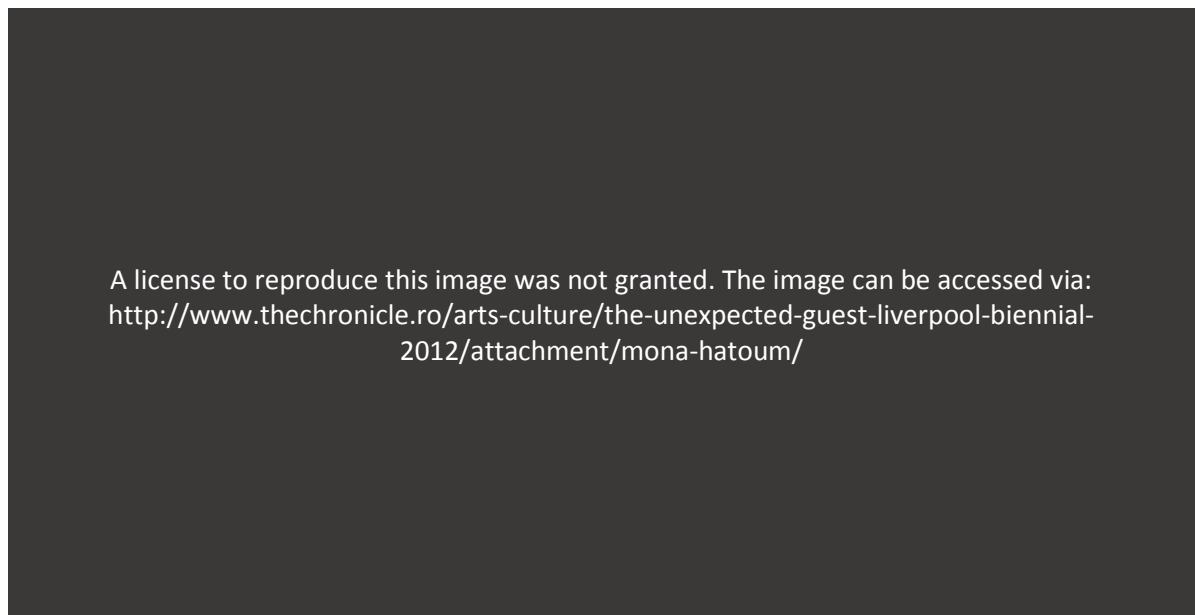


Figure 14. Mona Hatoum, *Doormat*, 1996, doormat, stainless steel pines, nickel-plated pins, glue, canvas, 3 x 71 x 405 cm.

---

<sup>69</sup> Hatoum et al., 29.

<sup>70</sup> Archer et al., 14.

A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
[http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/media/\\_source/issue03/2-hatoum-mona-p6468-prayer-mat-1995-2-2.jpg](http://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/media/_source/issue03/2-hatoum-mona-p6468-prayer-mat-1995-2-2.jpg)

Figure 13. Mona Hatoum, *Prayer Mat*, 1995, nickel-plated brass pins, brass compass, glue, canvas.

Similarly, Hatoum has employed the same process of making for the floor piece titled *Prayer Mat*. The subject matter is in context of a sense of belonging and nostalgia. Prayer is one of the central elements of Islamic practice and worship and is performed five times a day. One must face Mecca, where the Kaaba is located. Muslims who live abroad use a “Kiblah Compass”, a special compass used to assist in locating the direction to Mecca. *Prayer Mat* poetically addresses the notion that the exiled loses their sense of direction of the location of home. “The use of a Kiblah compass expresses both disorientation and the desire for reorientation that is, in this case, a *literal* quest for the lost orient”.<sup>71</sup>

Moreover the work addresses the complexity and paradox of exile. The hybrid *Prayer Mat* is made entirely from nails and pins. This is a severe contrast to the traditional prayer mat, which is literally soft and comfortable to support the body during the prayer ritual and spiritual engagements with God. It’s very obvious the *Prayer Mat* is not a comfortable ground to stand or sit. This is the paradox of being in exile. Hatoum has exposed the complexity and hardships, addressing it poetically through the use of form, material vocabulary and the concept. Caterina Albano has addressed that “...the artist explores the meaning of objects through their materiality and conversely their materiality through their

---

<sup>71</sup> Gannit Ankori, *Palestinian Art* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 124.

meaning. Both are far from permanent, eroded by time and use, recast by history and narratives, and performed by physical and cultural processes".<sup>72</sup>

The materiality and form have become key elements in Hatoum's work entitled *Drowning Sorrows*. She has created a circle from pieces of glass of varying shapes and sizes. The use of sharp and cut glass imply the act of cutting, which brings an awareness of pain. The work evokes the contradictions of the pain and beauty that resonates from the experience of being an exile away from home. In addition the work has indicated very obviously the glasses are not whole. This invokes the idea of the fragment; that parts are absent and lost or left behind somewhere: "...exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind for ever".<sup>73</sup>

Hatoum has introduced the notion of physical and psychological disturbance through the use of form and material vocabulary. In addition, she reveals a sense of consideration or care through her thoughtful method of the process of making and cutting the glass bottles at different angles. The way the bottles are displayed, angled in different directions creates a sense of disorientation, chaos and confusion. In this regard Rehnuma Sazzad mentioned:

These varieties of cut glasses speak of an undying pain that the exile suffers. In an exile's life, irresolvable pain comes from disposessions, uncertainty, and non-belonging. Being uprooted from a deep-seated identity, an exile finds him/herself catapulted into a perpetual flux; neither going back "home" nor a complete harmony with the adopted environment through adopting internally the "new" ideals is easily achievable. There exists an insuperable rift between his/her identity and locales which both are nevertheless integral parts of their identity.<sup>74</sup>

Nevertheless the work signifies both flexibility and instability. These works do not reveal a fixed identity. They appear to be ungrounded. "Hatoum portrays the exilic 'identity as unable to identify with itself', as Said puts it".<sup>75</sup>

Nonetheless the powerful sense of colour and the delicacy of the work have an embedded beauty in the work. This is a reference to the act of being in exile as containing the potential for colourful and rich experiences. It is a combination of journey with hardship. The exile experience is a complicated matter, "... the art work is transformed into a celebration of 'exile'. Despite 'Drowning' in 'Sorrows', Hatoum's work demonstrates an authority to give vent to the exilic pain through a work of beauty".<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Caterina Albano, *Fear and Art in the Contemporary World* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), p. 101.

<sup>73</sup> Archer et al., p.110.

<sup>74</sup> Sazzad, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11.

The exile provides the opportunities to encounter the richness of differences and gains new knowledge. In other words, it offers the idea that an exile can become an explorer despite the pain and anguish. Hatoum has transformed a personal experience into a collective experience in a broader context. The ambiguity and paradox of *Drowning Sorrows* has become a platform to question the reality of exile.

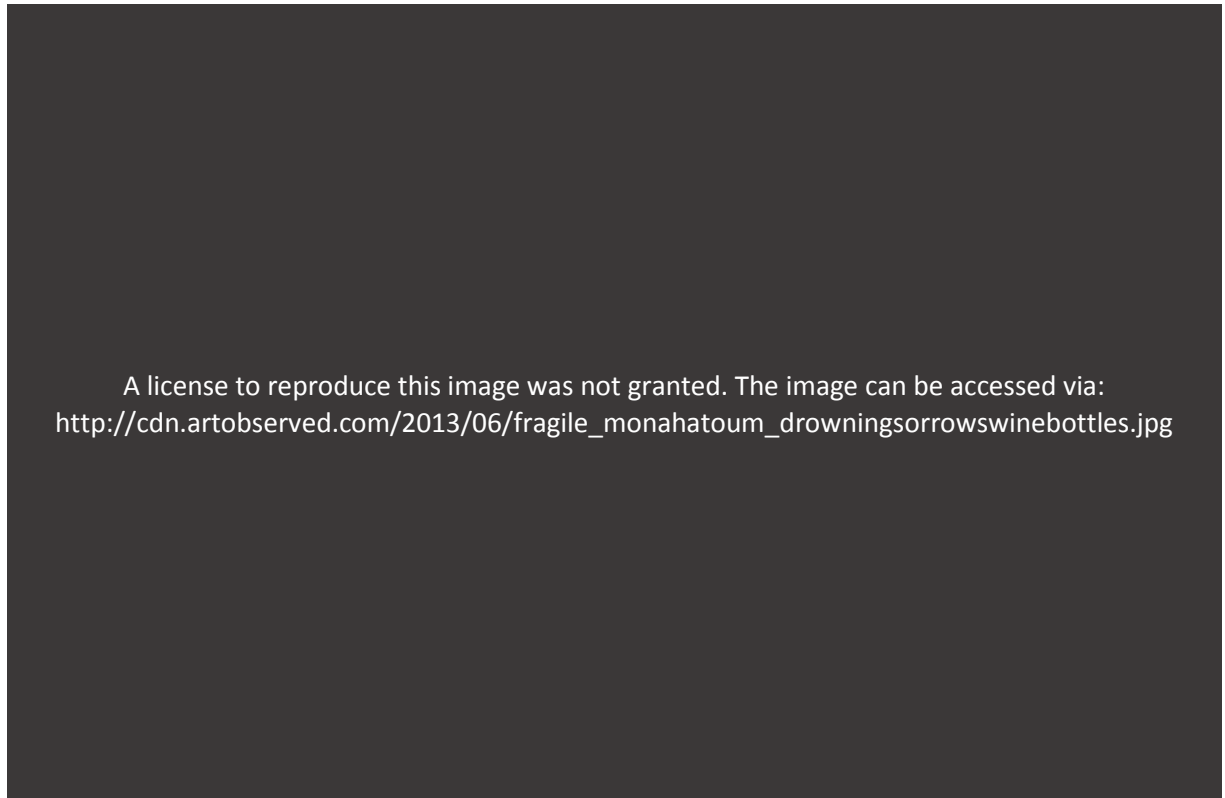


Figure 16. Mona Hatoum, *Drowning Sorrows*, 2014, cut bottles, dimensions variable.

## 2.6. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

This section describes and addresses a brief historical background of Kurdistan and the Kurds over the last two centuries in context of geopolitical history. It addresses the socio-political issues including the crisis of identity, discrimination, dislocation, execution and distraction.

### BRIEF BACKGROUND OF KURDISTAN'S MODERN HISTORY

The Kurds make one nation and their population is between 40–45 million. They are the largest ethnic group in the world without their own state. Their homeland is called “Kurdistan” which means “land of the Kurds”, and is mentioned by “the European travels from the fifteenth century onward”.<sup>77</sup> Kurdistan is not recognised as a state or country.

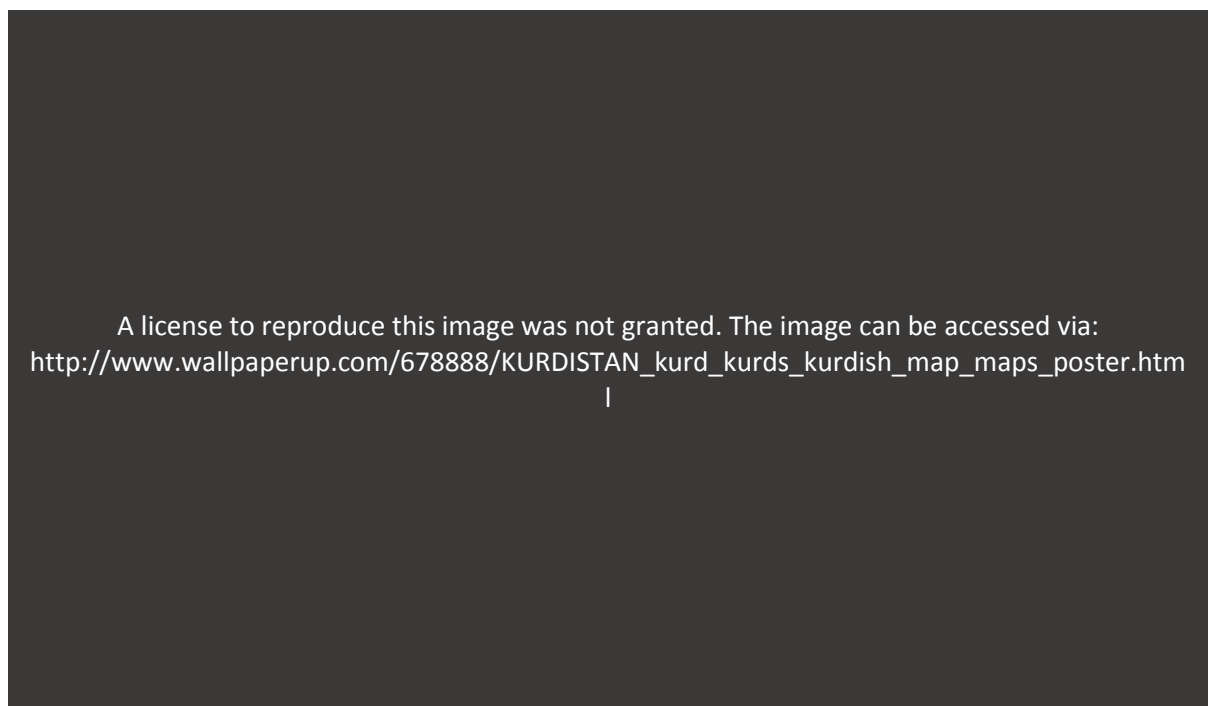


Figure 17. “Kurdistan” divided into four parts among Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

In 1920, following World War One, after the Ottoman Empire was abolished, the victorious allies of World War One (British and French) promised the Kurds the establishment of an independent state of “Kurdistan” by the Treaty of Sevres. However, in 1923 the allies denied and broke the promise to create a Kurdish State; instead they divided “Kurdistan” into four parts, among Turkey, Iran, and two newly established Arab states, Iraq and Syria.<sup>78</sup> The modern history of Kurdistan started from this time and the division affected every aspect of socio-political life of the Kurds. Throughout the twentieth century the Kurds struggled for

---

<sup>77</sup> Susan Meiselas and Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan : In the Shadow of History* (New York: Random House, 1997), 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

self-determination, as their rights were opposed and hampered by the region's countries as well as by the international communities (The West). The Kurds were often used as pawns in the regional geo-political context.

### **CYCLE OF DESTRUCTION: KURDS AND KURDISTAN SITUATION WITHIN FOUR STATES AFTER THE DIVISION**

Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria each agreed not to recognise an independent Kurdish state and have also denied the Kurds rights in every socio-political aspect in life. Simply, Kurds were second-class citizens (in Syria, they were not recognised as citizens). Within all four countries, the Kurds have faced discrimination, execution, displacement, geo-demographic changes, destruction and genocide. For these reasons the Kurds have been rebelling ever since.

Until recently, the Turkish government has denied that Kurds live in Turkey. They are called "Turks from mountains" and are not recognised by the Turkish constitution. Until recently, "Kurds were not allowed to speak their language, or even to name their children Kurdish names and they were forced to wear traditional Turkish clothing. The Turkish Government attempted 'Turkification efforts' in Turkey".<sup>79</sup> In addition as many as 4,000 Kurdish villages were burnt and destroyed<sup>80</sup>, and more than 2.5 million Kurds were dislocated to other parts of Turkey and abroad.<sup>81</sup>

The Kurds in Iraq faced extreme forms of repression under Saddam Hussein's regime when the Iraqi government systematically carried out genocide against the Kurdish people in the 1980s with the Al-Anfal Campaign; "4,000 villages were destroyed from 1975 until the end of the Al-Anfal Campaign in the late 1980s".<sup>82</sup> In addition even they used chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians. In 1988, 5,000 Kurdish civilians were killed and more than 10,000 injured or died in hospital in the town of Halabja, when the Iraqi army attacked with chemical weapons.<sup>83</sup> These atrocities continued in the Qradakh region in 1988 and as a result more than 180,000 civilians were killed in mass graves, sometimes alive.<sup>84</sup> One-and-a-half million people were left homeless or dislocated and thousands fled into Turkey, Iran, and European countries.

---

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Adeli, "Who Are the Kurds?," University of Arizona accessed May 4, 2016.

<http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Who%20Are%20the%20Kurds.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> Dexter Filkins, "Kurds Are Finally Heard: Turkey Burned Our Villages," *The New York Times*, October 24, 2003, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/24/world/kurds-are-finally-heard-turkey-burned-our-villages.html>.

<sup>81</sup> Meiselas and Bruinessen, 366.

<sup>82</sup> George Black, Watch Human Rights, and Watch Middle East, *Genocide in Iraq : The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993), p.xii,20.

<sup>83</sup> Meiselas and Bruinessen, 308.

<sup>84</sup> Omar Sinan, "Iraq to Hang 'Chemical Ali' : Saddam Hussein's Cousin, Ali Hassan Majid, Faces Death for His Role in Gassing Kurds.," *Tampa Bay Times*, June 25, 2007, accessed May 6, 2016, [http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq\\_to\\_hang\\_\\_Chemica.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq_to_hang__Chemica.shtml).



The Kurds in Iran were not in a better situation and also faced many difficulties and struggles. The Kurds in Syria also suffered through the Syrian governments attempts to “Arabize” some of the Kurds (similar to the Turkification efforts in Turkey),<sup>85</sup> and left almost 300,000 Kurds without any identification cards or citizenship.<sup>86</sup> As a result they had no rights from the state; they were nationless without rights.

Currently, there are many Kurdish refugees living in many places within and outside of the Middle East. The Kurds remain divided by international borders. Many Kurds were forced to leave their homeland into exile. Despite this persecution and destruction they are regenerating and contributing to the Kurdish culture.

#### **TIMELINE OF SELECTED SOCIO-POLITICAL EVENTS:**

1919-1923: World War One treaties create Middle Eastern countries (no Kurdistan) and France and Great Britain control over Syria and Iraq.

1920: The Treaty of Sevres dissolves the Ottoman Empire and agrees to establish a Kurdish state.<sup>87</sup>

1923: The Treaty of Lausanne accepts the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and dismantles the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 preventing the establishment of a Kurdish state.<sup>88</sup>

1962: The Syrian government orders the withdrawal of the status of Syrian citizenship from approximately 300,000 Kurds in Syria.<sup>89</sup> As a result they become stateless people without rights and access to employment, education, property ownership and legal marriage.<sup>90</sup>

1974: Clashes erupt and 130,000 Kurds from Iraq flee into Iran,<sup>91</sup> after the deadlock of the Kurdish Autonomy agreement between Iraqi Kurds and the government in Baghdad.

1988: The Iraqi regime’s chemical attack on Kurdish people in Halabja kills more than 5,000 people and more than 10,000<sup>92</sup> are injured or suffer long-term illness.

1983- 1988: The Iraqi regime launch military operations known as the Al-Anfal campaign (The Spoils) against the Kurds of northern Iraq, part of a campaign of genocide—180,000

---

<sup>85</sup> Adeli, "Who Are the Kurds?"

<sup>86</sup> Jake Dizard, Christopher Walker, and Vanessa E. Tucker, "Countries at the Crossroads an Analysis of Democratic Governance, 2011," (2011): 625, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10552007>.

<sup>87</sup> Meiselas and Bruinessen, 50.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Dizard, Walker, and Tucker, 625.

<sup>90</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London; New York; New York: I.B. Tauris ; In the U.S.A. and Canada distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996), 475.

<sup>91</sup> Post Washington, "Who Are the Kurds?," (1999), accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm>.

<sup>92</sup> Meiselas and Bruinessen, 308.

Kurdish civilians are killed,<sup>93</sup> most of them buried alive in mass graves. Also about 1.5 million people are left homeless, and thousands flee into Turkey, Iran and European countries.

1991: After the First Gulf War, millions of Kurds from Iraq flee toward the Turkish and Iranian borders.

1991: Turkey repeals the law that it is illegal to speak Kurdish. Although Kurdish may now be spoken in private, it remains illegal to speak it in public life.

1980s-1990s: The Turkish army destroy 4,000 villages; as a result between 2.5 to 4 million Kurds in Turkey are displaced and become refugees.<sup>94</sup>

Currently: The situation of the Kurds in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq has improved, but serious problems still continue in other parts of Kurdistan.

### **THE RESEARCH STUDY AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

This project is informed by and based on my background as a Kurd (from Iraq), who has lived through the recent socio-political history of Kurdistan and experienced the instability and turmoil of the Middle East. This experience includes working with Non-Government Organisations under the umbrella of the United Nations from 1992–1996 with disadvantaged people and the victims of war.

As an individual coming from a repressive environment, I intend through this project to show the suffering of my people. South African artist William Kentridge described it this way in *Art: 21 Century*:

The political interest in what happens in South Africa is very much part of the work. When I started working as an artist, one of the questions that seemed inescapable to me was how one finds an adequate way (whether it's adequate or not is open to debate) of not initially illustrating a society that one lives in, but allows what happens there to be part of the work, the vocabulary, and the raw material that is dealt with.<sup>95</sup>

In addition, through the vocabulary of material and form, I want to extend my personal experiences in order to address the broader issues of suffering, disruption and renewal relating to individuals in other societies and places. However my emphasis in this project is to look at the social-political problem through my own personal experience, which I have witnessed and also as a former political refugee. Doris Salcedo says in *Art: 21 Century*: "... I wanted to make that private pain into something public because it is not a private problem. It is a social problem. So I wanted to get that pain, the mourning that was in the sphere of

---

<sup>93</sup> Sinan, "Iraq to hang 'Chemical Ali' : Saddam Hussein's cousin, Ali Hassan Majid, faces death for his role in gassing Kurds".Sinan.

<sup>94</sup> Filkins, "Kurds Are Finally Heard: Turkey Burned Our Villages".Filkins.

<sup>95</sup> Sollins et al., 16.

the private, into the sphere of the public... to convey the idea that it is a public problem that is happening to many, many people”.<sup>96</sup>

This project aims to address the tragedy of conflict and the brutality of authoritarian regimes, which lead to forceful displacement and other social catastrophes. However, this project will not only focus on the desperation and fragility of individuals and their society. It will also assert the redemptive role of art, and will highlight the human condition which when under difficult situations requires and seeks hope, renewal and light.

### **EXPERIENCING AND WITNESSING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL EVENTS IN KURDISTAN (IRAQ) (1980-PRESENT)**

I lived through and witnessed the following socio-political history of Kurdistan (Iraq). In 1988, the Iraqi regime’s chemical attack on Kurdish people in the town of Halabja killed more than 5,000 people and more than 10,000 were injured or suffered long-term illness. From 1980 to 1988 the Iraqi military operations know as Al-Anfal (The Spoils) were part of a campaign of genocide: 180,000 Kurdish civilians were killed, most of them buried alive in mass graves. More than 4,000 villages in Kurdistan in Iraq were also destroyed, burned and the agricultural lands thoroughly dried out—even animals were killed. In addition personally I have experienced and witnessed the following political conflicts:

1980- 1988: Iraq and Iran War

1988: Halabja chemical weapons attacked by Iraqi regime, 5,000 Kurdish civilians were killed

1988: Al-Anfal Campaign (The Spoils), Iraqi regime against Kurdish civilians—180,000 killed

1990- 1991: The First Gulf War

1991: The Kurds’ (Kurdistan-Iraq) uprising against Saddam Hussein regime

1991: Approximately 4 million Kurds vacated all major cities and towns in Kurdistan, displaced on the Iran/Iraq and Turkey/Iraq borders

1994-1997: The Civil War in Kurdistan (Iraq)

2003: The Second Gulf War and the invasion/liberation of Iraq

2003- Current: The sectarian violence and civil war in Iraq

2014- Current: The war against Islamic State (IS or DAESH)

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 39.

## **2.7. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER TWO**

In this chapter in the section of the community of practice, I have discussed how I researched and investigated across the artistic context of contemporary art practice, through the works of key contemporary artists of this project, including Doris Salcedo, Hiwa K and Mona Hatoum.

I have investigated and explored specific aspects of their work. How each artist employs material vocabulary and form, and the use of processes/methods of manipulation of object (material and form), and their means in the works. These artists use diverse mediums to address and articulate the content and context of socio-political issues.

However, in contrast to the artists I mentioned above, in this project I have employed, humble and different materials and forms, and processes of making to address specific issues of the social and political matters. I discuss these in Chapter Three: Projects.

Additionally, in the second section of this chapter concerning the social and political context of this project I have discussed the historical and political background of Kurdistan. My objective in describing a brief socio-political history of Kurdistan is not motivated by any political ideology, it is an attempt to address and acknowledge the socio-political background of Kurdistan over the last two centuries. I believe that this is necessary in order to be of assistance to the reader and reveal the complexity of the situation in Kurdistan, as it is relevant to understanding the context of this research.

## **CHAPTER THREE: PROJECTS:**

### **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE**

#### **3.2. PROJECT 1: HANGING ISSUES**

#### **3.3. PROJECT 2: PAST IN THE PRESENT**

#### **3.4. PROJECT 3: KNOWING AND UNKNOWNING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE**

#### **3.5. PROJECT 4: IRHAL (EXPEL), HOPE AND SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT**

#### **3.6. PROJECT 5: FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER / FACING LIVING PAST IN THE PRESENT**

#### **3.7. CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER THREE**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE**

This chapter consists of five projects. Each project presents the development of contents and contexts that deal with specific socio-political issues/events. These are articulated through the processes of making within the theoretical background.

In this chapter, through these five projects, I have employed a range of working methods to develop the ideas and manipulate the materials and forms of the objects in order to address the theme of each project, and the outcomes and the processes of making in the following sections.

### 3.2. PROJECT 1: *HANGING ISSUES*



Figure 18. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2010, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space/Baan Monfai, Chiang Mai, Thailand, installation view.

**Title:** *Hanging Issues*

**Year:** 2012

**Medium:** Photograph print imbedded in hand made Thai paper (Kada Saa)

**Size:** Installation dimensions variable, 60 panels, each 82 x 60 cm.

#### **PROJECT ONE OVERVIEW**

- INTRODUCTION *HANGING ISSUES*
- SURFACE AND TEXTURE
- INSTALLATION STRUCTURE
- CONCLUSION TO PROJECT ONE

## INTRODUCTION *HANGING ISSUES*

This series *Hanging Issues* was developed during the time I spent in Thailand in 2012 when I undertook an art residency in Ne Na Contemporary Art Residency in Chiang Mai. This project evolved from a body of work entitled *The Few Lines of History* 2011, photo installations that was developed during my study in the MFA Program at RMIT University in 2010 (Figure 19). This work was created in response to social and political unrest in the recent history of Kurdistan. The work examined how contemporary political events manifest in societies, which are facing turbulence in all aspects of life. It explored how this unrest directly or indirectly reflects and impacts on the individual within that society. *Hanging Issues* developed out of this context. The title *Hanging Issues* is a play on words—it refers to: (1) the physical installation of the works, which comprises of 60 photographic panels hung onto six parallel clothes lines. (2) Unsolved political issues that are still in a state of lingering (i.e. Hanging Parliament). (3) The action of punishing someone to death through the action of hanging. (4) “Hang somebody out to dry”, to leave somebody to struggle through a bad situation without support.



Figure 19. Rushdi Anwar, *Untitled*, 2010, installation view.

*Hanging Issues* consists of 60 panels of documentary photographs embedded in handmade Thai Paper (Kada Saa). Each panel contains a segment of a printed documentary photograph of political events related to the recent political history of Kurdistan. I embedded these within the Kada Saa paper in an attempt to evoke a sense of the many layers of issues.

The photographs in the work are all taken by me. One group are re-photographed images sourced from public news footage and mass media that depict a range of political events in Kurdistan from the 1970s-1990s. I cropped them to frame just the faces of individuals in the

original news images, so that they became like close-up portraits (Figure 20). This enabled closer examination of their facial expressions that were a record of their shock and uncertainty about their futures: “The human power to survive and seek for hope” (Figures 20 and 22).

The subject matter of the other group of images depicts broken fragments of statues of the Buddha including details of hands and feet of these statues. I took these photographs while I was on residency in Thailand in 2012.

The photographs that were sourced from the media emotionally captivated me. They evoked memories of my childhood during the conflicts in my homeland. I want to address the fact that these political issues from the past continue into the present day in different forms and events—history is continuously repeating itself.

*Hanging Issues* reveals the complicated issues of political events that give so many perspectives to what it is to live in a conflict zone, as a consequence to inherit difficult issues to deal with through history. It aims to be an emotional experience. It deals with sensitive moments in political history, touching moments of suffering and hostility, and beautiful moments of survival and renewal. The project contains works that do have redemption, and they do have a bright side; they offer the opportunity beyond errors of the past or the conflicts of the present.

I attempted in this project to create connection between viewer and subject matter, between past and present by bringing together photography and materiality of paper, texture, mark-making to address and to highlight the subjectivity of photography and the objectivity of paper. I discuss the signification of this below.

The works in this project consist of photographic images that reference the past history, but in a way that is relevant to the present. The context of the works still has a strong connection and continues into a political minefield of present time. The issues create bitterness. I try to unpack that content of bitterness and suffering and put them on display in poetic ways, in order to transform feelings from bitterness to fragility and care. This means I have to transform the image. I tested this by combining them with handmade paper. Handmade paper reveals the touch of the time of its making; it has as a material a warm feeling, a delicacy and an apparent fragility.

I wanted to create the conversation between the photographic images as the subject matter with the papermaking process and the quality of paper surface. I challenged myself to find a way to bring together photo printed and characteristics quality of paper. It was important to merge together both elements (Figure 21), rather than like collage or hard edges.





Figure 20. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, (detail), 2012.

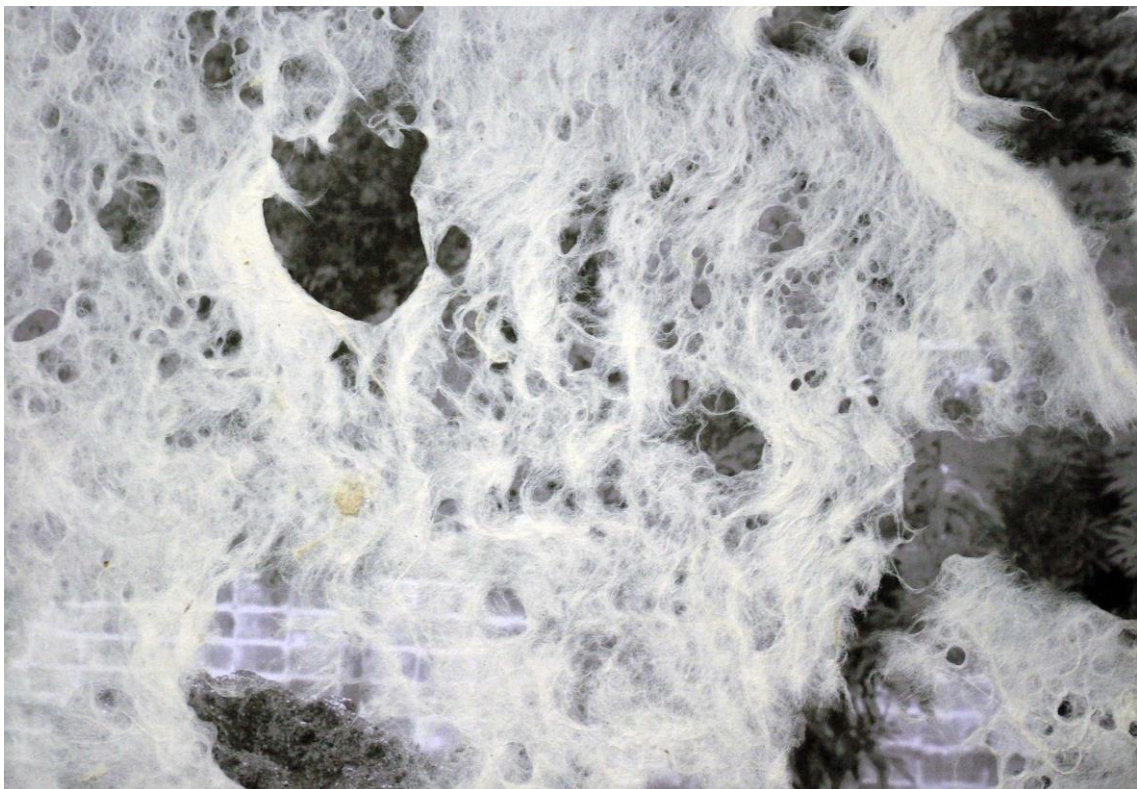


Figure 21. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, (detail), 2012.

## **SURFACE AND TEXTURE**

I wanted to combine the harsh reality of the issues prevalent in the documentary photographs with sensitivity and physical delicacy of material, in this case the Thai Kada Saa paper. I used the paper as a metaphor for recovery, gentleness and care: “Materials have a surface quality which we call texture. This quality we experience both by looking and feeling”.<sup>97</sup>

I embedded the photographs between two layers of paper pulp. This pulp was extremely delicate and fragile. The photographs were concealed between the layers of pulp—in order to reveal parts of the images I applied water with pressure, which caused parts of the paper pulp to tear. The image was revealed between the broken layers of paper pulp (Figures 20, 22). This technique—of concealing and revealing parts of the image—became a metaphor for how individuals’ stories have been hidden because of political motives in history. The process is also a metaphor for how the skin may react to exposure from a bullet or an explosion in conflict zones.

Learning the craft of papermaking gave me control over the effects and readings of the surface and textural quality of the works. The handmade paper has a range of qualities, which could be described as; cratered, shattered, peeling, bumpy, porous, spongy and rough (Figure 22). “The graininess of such... is often used to express the feeling of dinginess in some badly lit subjects or to give a greater sense of urgency and violence to pictures of war and civil disorder”.<sup>98</sup> The surface of the works aim to reference or evoke human skin as well as the perceived view of tumultuous political events.

I want to refer to them as human skins, how their skins are damaged and dreadful. For example when I looked at some images from the places that had been attacked by gas and heavy weapons, the victim’s skins were extremely damaged as consequence of these attacks (Figure 24). The images revealed and were witnesses of inhuman and cruel attack. The surface references tragedy and damage. Nevertheless the society overcomes the tragedy but the scar still remains. Furthermore I wanted to utilise the paper characters as metaphor as scars on skin of history. The skin-like appearance is offset by the very visible texture of the paper characteristics.

---

<sup>97</sup> Frederick Palmer, *Visual Awareness* (London: Batsford, 1972), 24.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.





Figure 22. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, (detail), 2012.





Figure 23. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, (detail), 2012.



Figure 24. Martin Pope, *Jusim Muhammad*, an eight-year-old victim of a chemical attack in Halabja 1988.

## INSTALLATION STRUCTURE

The project installed in an open space at Ne Na Contemporary Art Space in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The work was installed in open space in the courtyard of the Monfai Cultural Centre/ Living Museum. The courtyard was situated surrounded by a number of galleries which hold and display traditional Thai crafts and artworks. The size of the space (courtyard) which I had installed the work was approximately 120 x 80 m. The work integrated to the space, in other words the work merged with the characteristic elements of the space which is traditional Lanna style architecture of northern Thailand. Even the content of the installation was not site-specific installation, but the work depicted and responded to the surrounding environments—for instance with the slight breeze the panels started gently to float.

The works were suspended with ordinary wooden clothes pegs, attached to six parallel clotheslines. The panels were displayed in zigzag layout. The space between each line was more than one metre and also there were one-metre gaps between each panel (Figure 24). The zigzag arrangement of the panels enabled the readings to work and build over time as in a procession. There was a strict formality about the format installation of the panels. This arrangement limits the spatial movement of the viewer, as they are required to pass close to the work and deal with content again and again time after time. They are dealing with a continuing representation of a past event in the present during their passage through the work. However the installation arrangement offered an opportunity for the viewer to investigate each image closely. I wanted the work to have a hovering presence in viewers' space evoking the sense of the past actions on the paper and of photographs becoming present as existing phenomena in the here and now drawing attention to these things being in the now.

The purpose of this zigzag layout format is to create an arena to display the works. It offers opportunity for the viewers to find themselves inside the work, to become a part of the work. They were not just passively standing and looking at the work, but they were moving through it. Additionally the installation format offered possibility for the viewer to engage with the work from different viewpoints (Figure 25). The hanging structure of the installation allowed the work to hover in the air. If one moves alongside the panels, they seem to gradually appear and disappear as they shift from rectangular planes to the vertical view of slight lines. The open-air installation permits the wind to gently move the images.

My goals in this project were the integration of material and image through the process of making in order to enhance the narrative and the concept of change. Also I wished to investigate and seek to find the way to provide and facilitate integration of material as paper with image as photo and to employ the material's physicality and the attributes of paper to highlight the subject matter of the photographs. Furthermore it was important for both elements to be integrated and fused into each other in order to address the narrative and ethical issues of my story.



Figure 25. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, the panels were displayed in zigzag layout (detail), 2012.

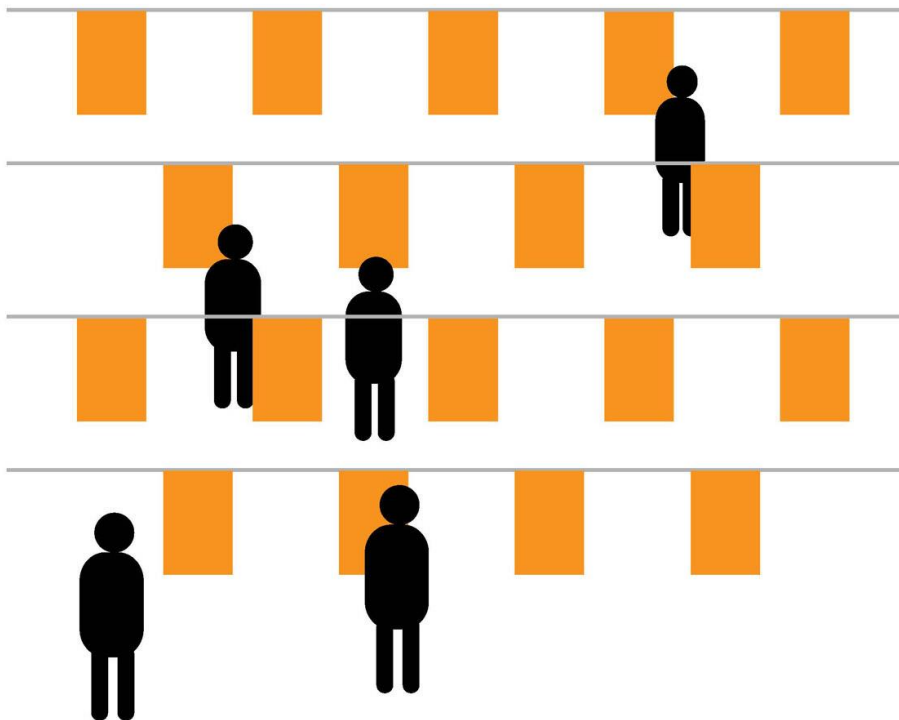


Figure 26. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, installation structure zigzag format graphic layout (detail), 2012.

## **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT ONE**

This project underlined three aspects; 1- methods of installation structure, 2- surface texture and materiality of paper, 3- display photography as installation in an open space. I used the installation structure in zigzag format in open space, in which I was able to examine and present the formal elements of the work in different ways that affected the readings. As the viewer walked through the work, in a sense they became a part of the work. They engaged with the work by being inside the work, reading and experiencing the work in actual time and space. In addition I developed and gained the craft skill of papermaking in Thai traditional manner. That has allowed me to infuse photography within paper without pinning or glueing, and create unique surface qualities, which enriched and invoke the theme of the project.

The experiences, knowledge, and methods of working with photography, which I have gained through this project has informed Project 2, and the use of installation methods has informed projects 3 and 4. This will be discussed in the following sections.

### 3.3. PROJECT 2: *PAST IN THE PRESENT*



Figure 27. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra), *Landlock* exhibition, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013.

**Title:** *Past in the present*

**Year:** 2012 -2013

**Medium:** Photograph print treated with smoke, photograph, smoke on board and Smoke on sand paper and mixed medium.

**Size:** Installation dimensions variable.

**Small panels:** 20 x 30 cm each (one edition)

**Large print:** 118 x 88 cm.

#### **PROJECT TWO OVERVIEW**

- **INTRODUCTION *PAST IN THE PRESENT***
- **RE-PHOTOGRAPHING DOCUMENTARY PHOTO JOURNALISM**
- **METHODS AND PROCESSES OF RE-PHOTOGRAPHING**
- **MATERIALITY AND MY PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER**
- **READING COLOUR ASPECTS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND MATERIALS**
- **PERSONAL CONNECTION; WHAT IS IT ABOUT?**
- **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT TW**



## INTRODUCTION *PAST IN THE PRESENT*

This project employs process, 2D and 3D structures, materiality, colour and photography in the form of multi-media installation to address political history and social content. It includes a personal connection that relates to the core subject matter.

In this project I have used photography and the signficatory readings of materials in order to conduct the research. *Past in the Present* was informed by an evaluation and consideration of the key techniques, imagery and my use of materials in my previous works; in particular the work *Hanging Issues* (Project 1) played a significant role. This enabled me to investigate how and which materials to select and then to utilise. I asked how the selected materials could amplify the subject matter of the selected images from the political photo journalist sources with regard to trauma and tragedy.



Figure 28. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, *Landlock* exhibition, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013.

This project differs from Project 1 in the following aspects:

I explored how the prominence of colour and format can address, add to and evoke the subject matter of tragedy. This project extended the range of materials to include smoke and sandpaper in order to extend the narrative and emotive readings within the work.

*Past in the Present* is a photographic installation (Figure 26: *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013), each image containing a story that forms an overall narrative. The series records the aftermath of the 1998 chemical gas attack on the population of Halabja Kurdistan, my

hometown. The event was orchestrated by the Iraqi regime as a targeted assault on the Kurdish civilian population. I re-photographed a segment of each image in the series of documentary photographs of the event, and individually treated each image with smoke to reference the dense haze and the lack of clarity that has come to symbolise the regime, as well as the turbulent history that has characterised Kurdistan in recent times.

Through this project I want address the issues not only of violence, fear, suffering and death but also redemption that marks the modern history of Halabja and its people. This was a time for the gloomiest reflections and most intense hopelessness in that place. I aimed to highlight and reflect upon these moods directly in the works. The project is shaped by and holds my personal experience of loss and my memories of my relatives. It is an attempt to imagine difficult moments of unbelievable struggling and suffering of the civilians in Halabja during the attack. I hope that through art I can reflect upon survival and human determination to continue despite the horror that surrounds them.

As Seamus Heaney says in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for Literature entitled *Crediting Poetry*:

Without needing to be theoretically instructed, consciousness quickly realizes that it is the site of variously contending discourses.

He continues by stating that:

Poetry's (and I claim art's) credit is the power to persuade that vulnerable part of our consciousness of its rightness in spite of the evidence of wrongness all around it, the power to remind us that we are hunters and gatherers of values, that our very solitudes and distresses are creditable, in so far as they, too, are an earnest of our veritable human being.<sup>99</sup>

## **RE-PHOTOGRAPHING DOCUMENTARY PHOTO JOURNALISM**

I searched on Google for images related to the Halabja chemical attack. The images that I sourced online are public documents without copyright status which are from the following sources:

1. Former Iraqi government secret police and intelligence archives (1970s–1991). In 1991 during the Kurdish uprising against the former Iraqi Government, Kurdish parties and Kurdish civilians gained control of all Iraqi regime institutions.
2. Kurdish Political Parties (resistance) archive from (1970s – present day)
3. Political propaganda from (1970 – present day)

---

<sup>99</sup> Seamus Heaney's acceptance speech for the 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature entitled, *Crediting Poetry*, Nobel Prize, 1995

#### 4. My family photo albums

I searched websites online and the Google images to find images that related to the Halabja attack. As I went through the documentary photography that I had re-photographed I discovered fragments of the images that became highly evocative of the situation, for example (Figure 29) and (Figure 31). One of the photographs captured the figure of a boy running and crossing the empty street—meanwhile he was looking at the smoke of an explosion (Figure 31). It seemed to me that he was running to save his life. This image reduced his life to a stark representation of fear, shock and vulnerability. It is an image of traumatic emotion, of an innocent civilian under inhuman attack. It seems to me that this photographic moment reflects the reality of the history and the people in Halabja. Therefore I decided to focus on this segment as main image to use for this project for example (Figure 30).



Figure 29. (Left), *Halabja Chemical Attack or Halabja Massacre*, March 16, 1988



Figure 30. (Right), *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke, and mixed medium on board, 15 x 10 cm.

*Past in the Present* conveys a fresh approach to historical analysis—the images are both public documents (since the photographs were taken by journalists originally) and intensely intimate representations. Grouped together, they make critical connections between the narratives of the present, and the historical value inherent in chronicling the past. With this project I attempt to find a visual language to characterise my personal experience and emotional attachment as an individual coming from that place. Also I have direct connection and memory through political turmoil and trauma of that place.

This process of interrogating archival photographic images has been employed by artists including Christian Boltanski and John Divola. For example in Christian Boltanski's work entitled *Altar to the Chajes High School* (1987) he re-photographed individual faces from a

photo archive. The photo was photographed for the graduating class in a Jewish high school in Vienna in 1931.<sup>100</sup>

However artist John Divola from the USA has employed the re-photographing process differently in order to discover unexpected subject matter. He reveals birds and animals amid nature previously hidden in the backgrounds of archival and historic photographs.



Figure 31. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012- 2013, (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra) photograph print on paper, 118 x 88 cm.

---

<sup>100</sup> Christian Boltanski et al., *Lessons of Darkness : Billy Rose Pavilion*, 1989 (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1989), 4.

## **METHODS AND PROCESSES OF RE-PHOTOGRAPHING**

In this project this re-interrogation and re-framing of content through re-photographing became an important method. I utilised selected materials and techniques to re-photograph the materials, which I wanted to use in this project. I explored and experimented with a range of techniques. These techniques have contributed to the development of new images from the original photographs. As a result I created a new archive of photo images:

1. I printed these images onto A4 ordinary paper.
2. I exposed these digital prints to natural elements, by laying them out on my table in my studio for a period of time. Here, they accumulated dust, they faded in the sunlight, etc.
3. I re-photographed segments of these photographs so that they became digital files again.
4. Digitally, I applied a range of filters (like sepia toning, blur) to the images in the Photoshop program.
5. I printed these digital reproductions through C-type process.
6. I then treated these physically with smoke and sandpaper.

## **4. MATERIALITY AND MY PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER**

My investigation of the visual language in this project within photography and materials led me to exploring the essential elements that contribute to the unfolding of the story of survival and extinction. I place my personal emotions and memories at the centre of the work as the subject matter.

Throughout this project I have used segments of photographs and I manipulated them digitally. I then blurred some images, in order to increase the ambiguity of identity of the place and its people. I treated images with smoke in order to fuse surface and image readings together to create a ground that frames and evokes loss, chaos, aggression and violence. I want to focus on and to draw out those moments of the human condition, when they have to deal with the moments of the dimensions of the human fragility, fear, pain, darkness, loss. I want these images to evoke the tension, the breaking point in between hope and catastrophe, life and death.

I worked with smoke as a key material because of its ephemerality, and because of its ability as a material to be integrated into the surface of object directly. I treated the surface of the works with smoke. One of the characteristics of smoke as a material is its receptive quality which holds the trace of the slightest mark or gesture. The surface of these works references and suggests the dimensions of the human fragility and vulnerability (Figure 32). The application of smoke also creates darkness both physically and metaphorically. Through the use of smoke I want to create poetic statements of the subject matter. This process highlights how materiality is situated at the centre of my practice to signify content.



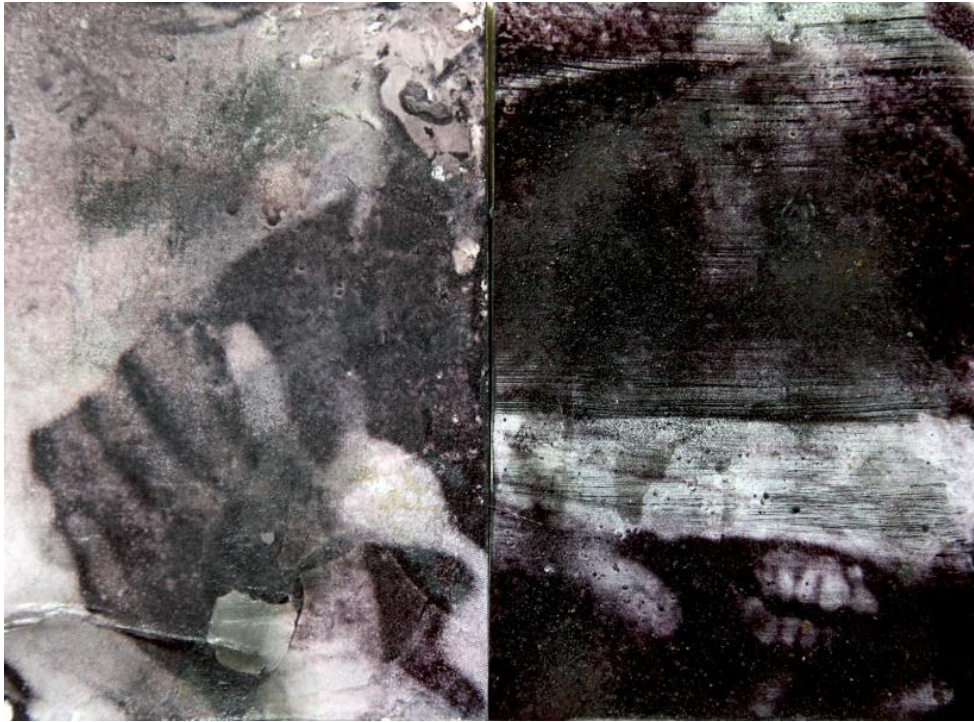


Figure 32. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke and mixed medium on board, 30 x 150 cm.

The process of application applying smoke onto the pictorial surface photograph is comparable to the process of painting. The dark colour (smoke) may be a representation of distraction, emptiness and death. Smoke is one of the materials that has characteristics to dominate the air and space and at the same time cannot be controlled—it cannot be collected, it cannot be held. It sits both on a surface and infuses into it. This work is a manifesto of the tragedy.

My use of sandpaper heightens the readings of erasure and abolishment. The resultant etched horizontal lines also echo the creases and scratches of age that are characteristic of old photographs (Figure 33).

I have aimed to use materials and photography to embrace important visual vocabulary to create poetic connections that explore loss and memory.

Through the development of the project I have explored and studied the aspects of dark colour and the depth in the black. Also colour format as monochromatic (sepia tone) in relation to photography. I have utilised smoke as an alternative to black or dark paint. I want to stress on the aspects of soot as reference to (1) the act of burning and smoke in conflict zones and the space of violence, (2) the smoke of bombs which were used in the attack and (3) symbolise dark haze and the lack of clarity.

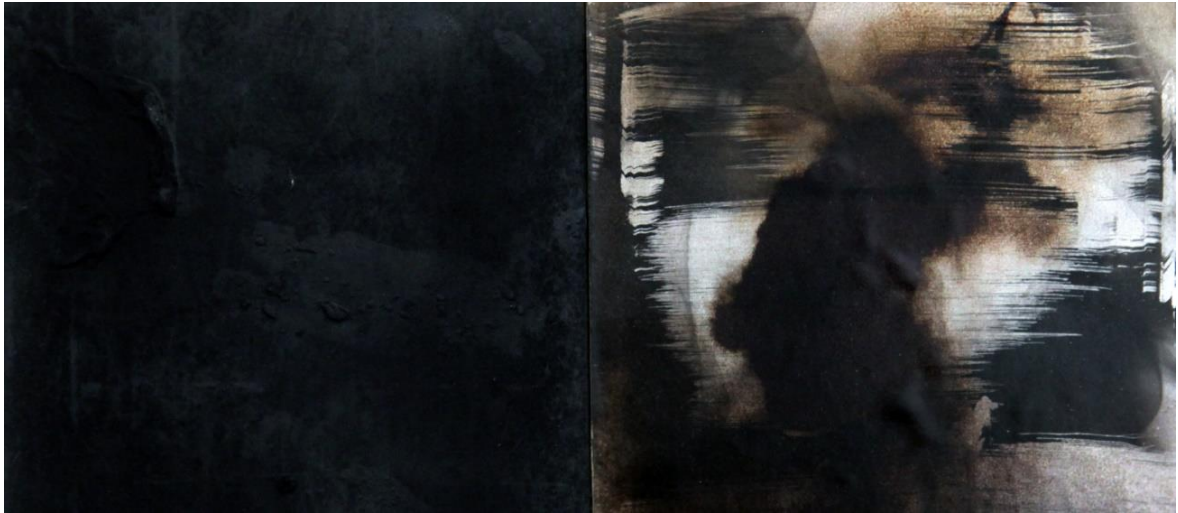


Figure 33. *Past in the Present*, (detail), 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke, smoke on sand paper and mixed medium.

### READING COLOUR: THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND MATERIALS

I have employed colour as one of the essential and primary elements in this project. In some of the images, I used a colour type or “colour format” “sepia tone”. Sepia tone is one of the kinds of monochromatic photography that the picture appears within a brown tint or shades of brown<sup>101</sup> (Figure 31). I employed this format of colour in order to create a sense of past “old time” in general that sepia tone in photography references. In addition digitally and physically through the burning process I have treated or converted the black and white photographs with sepia toning, in order to give the black and white photographs warmer tone and to enhance its archival and suggest ageing (Figure 34). Through this treatment of the process making, I aimed to create a sense of “emotional response”<sup>102</sup> through visual expression that generated murky/gloomy mood qualities. I used smoke to darken or seal the surface of sandpapers that created matte surface quality with no reflections; it has created a sense of silence.

The core aspect of colour of both elements of photo panels and dark sandpaper panels once again embarks on a parallel to signify the emotional response through the use of colour format to address and illustrate the subject matter of the tragedy.

The reading of colour as a pigment has many interpretations, some paradoxical ranging from the elegance of black, as in formal wear, to its association with death in the West. From to it being a container for everything as a mixture of all pigments, the iris through which all imagery, light travels. Darkness is different from black. Smokiness is different from pigment. Smoke is about obscuring, reducing light. It is the result of burning, therefore I felt it a perfect signifier to contribute to my content.

<sup>101</sup> Jesse Day, *Line Color Form : The Language of Art and Design* (New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2013), 30.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 31.



Figure 34. *Past in the Present*, (detail), 2012- 2013, photograph print treated with smoke, smoke on sand paper and mixed medium, 20 x 30 cm.

### **PERSONAL CONNECTION; WHAT IS IT ABOUT?**

This group of work refers directly to my personal experience and personal sentiment towards my childhood and my birthplace. It is about my memory and emotional attachment to my childhood and the history of my people. It is about place in the past. This work is an attempt to offer a way in which art can look at the cruelty and complexity of politics from different angles. It is about desperation and struggle of survival. It is about tearing away layers of history tension and struggle. It is about the fragility of sensitive moments, which holds stories about trauma and tragedy. It is about a genocide that included not only people but also animals and birds. It is an attempt to crack the dark to create a window to seek the light.

### **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT TWO**

In this project I investigated the use of segments of documentary photographs that were manipulated and treated with ephemeral material (smoke). This process generated and supported the complexity of the meaning materiality (smoke) and its characteristic qualities, tangible as well intangible. Also I employed the method of folding/unfolding photographs and then re-photographing them again. These methods and ideas of this project have formed and contributed significantly to Project 5; this will be discussed in that section.



### 3.4. PROJECT 3: *KNOWING AND UNKNOWING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE*



Figure 35. *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and black pigment.

**Title:** *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*

**Year:** 2012 -2014

**Medium:** White chalk and black pigment, digital photography, video, photography, installation

**Installation:** Dimensions variable

**Digital Prints:** Dimensions variable

**Video Length:** 4.30 minutes, HD video sound installation, one channel

#### **PROJECT 3 OVERVIEW**

- **INTRODUCTION: *KNOWING AND UNKNOWING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE***
- **SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE WORK**
- **CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND BACKGROUND OF THE WORK**
- **DISPLAY METHODS AS MULTIPLE INSTALLATIONS FORMATS AND VIDEO WORK**
- **STAGE ONE: DISPLAY THREE PILES OF CHALK ON A PLATFORM**
- **STAGE TWO: DISPLAY CHALKS AND BLACK PIGMENT ON THE FLOOR IN A CIRCLE FORMAT**
- **STAGE THREE: VIDEO WORK, TIME AS A MEDIUM AND STRUCTURE TIME AND MANIFESTATION THE NOTION OF CHANGE PHYSICALLY AND CONCEPTUALLY**
- **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT THREE**

## **INTRODUCTION: *KNOWING AND UNKNOWING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE***

The work *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle* consists of an installation and a video work.

The installation consists of 13,000 sticks of chalk and black pigment; the work is installed on the floor in the shape of a semi-circle. The pieces of chalk form half of the semi-circle, and the other half is formed by the use of black pigment. Another component of this project is a single channel video work and sound installation, which is of 4 minutes 30 seconds in duration.

I have employed objects (chalks) and black pigment as the primary materials, as well as form, scale, temporality and visual representation as key elements to address notions of hope and struggle through education in the context of socio-political violence.

## **SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE WORK**

This work employs materiality in the form of chalk and black pigment to address the notions of hope, struggle, fear and resilience in the socio-geopolitical context.

In this case, I have focused on the recent history of developing countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and countries in Africa and the Middle East looking at how students and the education system have been targeted by radical extremist groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Boko Haram in Nigeria. The ruthless and aggressive attacks against young students have resulted in rupture and disturbance in these societies. In the last two decades, fundamentalist groups have targeted schools and have committed violent terrorist attacks against the students. For example, Malala Yousafzai was 13 years old when she was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman in the north of Pakistan. Her crime was speaking up for girls' rights to education. Before the attack "she documented the anxiety, she and her friends felt as they saw students dropping away from class for fear of being targeted by militants, and as the girls began to attend school in plain clothes not uniform, so as not to draw attention to themselves".<sup>103</sup> Malala's is a powerful voice that resists fear and terror, and stands up for girls' rights to education. Nevertheless, this project work is not focusing on representing an individual's story like Malala Yousafzai, nor is it representing the political agenda. In contrast, I aim to approach and address these crucial issues poetically through the language of form and a particular material vocabulary that reflects educational and learning processes. I address this in the following sections below

## **CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND BACKGROUND OF THE WORK**

This project evolved from an invitation to participate in an exhibition at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in 2013, entitled *Landlock*. Initially, I researched the history of Afghanistan in the

---

<sup>103</sup> Asia BBC News, "Profile: Malala Yousafzai," accessed 3 May, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23241937>.

context of the social and political circumstances from past to recent days. Through the process of the research, I observed that education and knowledge has been weakened day by day. Since 1979 until today, the foundation of education has been destroyed due to constant conflict and wars that have ruptured the country. In addition, I focused on the common sense notion that knowledge and education are the fundamental positive tools to construct and improve the conditions of the society we live in. Through the working process and research, I noted most of the schools in these countries continue to use chalk and blackboards in the classrooms. Therefore I decide to employ chalk as a ready-made object.

My reasons for this are as follows:

1- The function of the chalk:

In many remote areas in Afghanistan and in many other developing countries, the blackboard and chalk continue to be used in schools as tools to communicate knowledge.

2- The material quality of the chalk:

I wanted to exploit the tactile quality that the chalk embodies. There is a quietness to the material, evident in the soft sound of the chalk against the hard surface of a blackboard. The poetic nature of chalk dust falling to the ground as it touches the surface of the blackboard. Additionally, chalk has a delicate and fragile material quality; if it is grasped too firmly it will crumble.

3- The personal quality of the chalk:

Chalk and blackboard were used in the schooling system when I was a child and thus the material evokes a sense of nostalgia for me. Personal and emotional attachment to chalk is based on this experience throughout my education from primary school to even high school in Kurdistan. Chalk and blackboard were the tools for learning at the classroom. Additionally my association to it was not only with the classroom; in my childhood I used chalk to express my feelings through drawing on the ground and walls on the streets of my neighbourhood. In this regard Iria Candela states:

The material properties of chalk aroused the curiosity of the passers-by. A kind of white clay created from gypsum and water, chalk is traditionally made in small bars and used to write on slate surfaces; its recognition as a paradigmatic educational instrument associated with learning and childhood games encouraged people to begin experimenting with the chalks.<sup>104</sup>

The artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla have used chalk in their project *Tiza (Lima) Chalk (Lima)*, whereby large pieces of chalk (163 cm long and about 20 cm in

---

<sup>104</sup> Iria Candela and Chris Miller, *Art in Latin America, 1990-2010* (2013), 114.

diameter) were displayed on the ground in public places, as an ongoing project in different locations. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla invite the public (passers-by) to engage and to use the chalk to write or draw something as they wish on the ground. The participants often provoked social and political issues through their comments or messages. As Allora has said, “the work complicates the principle of site-specificity. The chinks are the same form, produced in the same way, the same color every time. It's the same formula over and over. But the marks they leave, whether linguistic, visual, or just unreadable traces, stand as an index of a particular person in a particular place and time, under particular socio-political conditions”.<sup>105</sup>

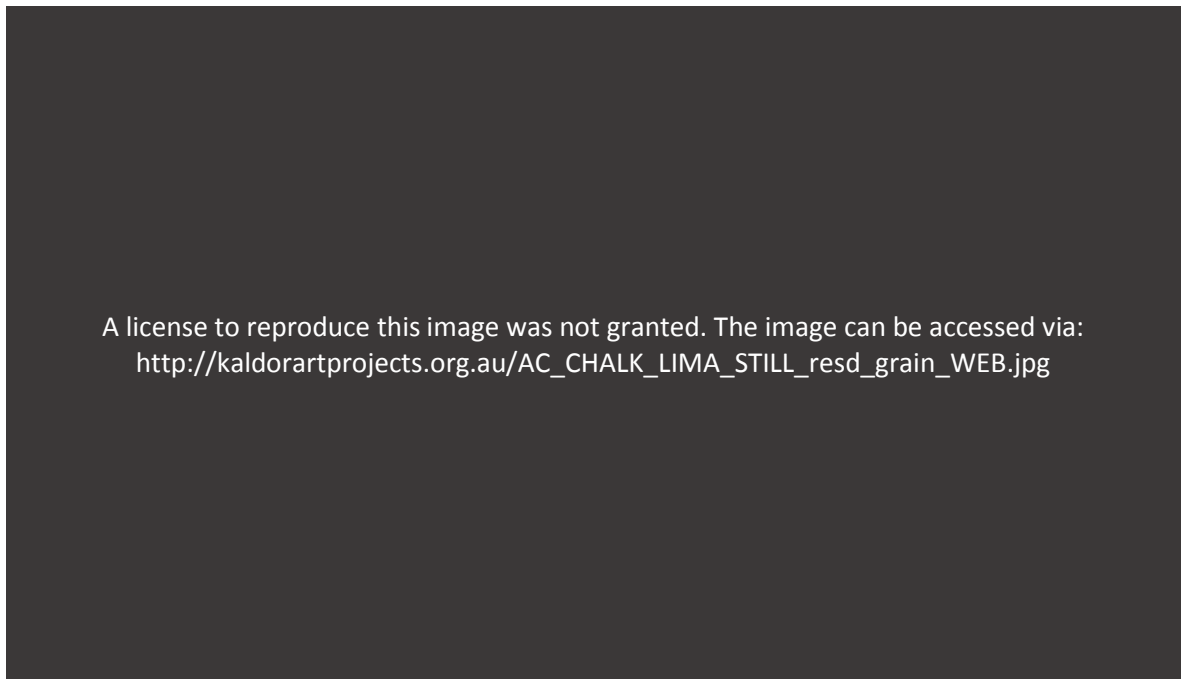


Figure 36. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, *Tiza (Lima) Chalk (Lima)*, 2002, Installation, Pasaja Santa Rosa, Bienal de Lima, 12 sticks of chalk, each 163 cm long and about 20 cm in diameter.

By using chalk in my work *Knowing and Unknowing*, *Circle of Hope and Struggle*, I attempt to explore the meaning of the chalk by revealing its material qualities and simultaneously exploring the material qualities through its meanings.<sup>106</sup> I have used chalk as a metaphor for knowledge and knowing; it is a tool used for the purposes of learning, representing and sharing knowledge or information. When chalk is deformed and becomes crushed or reduced to dust, it cannot deliver its purpose and usefulness as an object.

#### **DISPLAY METHODS AS MULTIPLE INSTALLATIONS FORMATS AND VIDEO WORK**

In each stage of this project, I started by experimenting with white chalk. I have examined and experimented with the chalk and other components that respond to the blackness of

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>106</sup> Albano, 101.

the blackboard. I employed different methods (see below stages One to Three) to display the work in installation format as well the video work. Martha Buskirk describes below a similar understanding to mine in relation to installation practice.

...the works, whether dispersed across the floor or arrayed along the walls, pointed to the importance of sculpture as the arena for a linked exploration of material qualities and site-specific forms, while at the same time confirming the dissolution of sculpture as a category that could delimit a consistent set of practices or strategies, much less a clearly defined medium.<sup>107</sup>

### **STAGE ONE: DISPLAY THREE PILES OF CHALK ON A PLATFORM**

I positioned or displayed three piles of chalk on a black platform (500 cm x 200 cm) that was placed on the floor in a space of the gallery. The first pile was made of fresh chalk pieces, the middle pile was a mixture of crushed and crumbled chalk and the third pile was made of the fine powder of crushed chalks (Figure 37).

Through the physical appearance of the chalk piles, I aim to evoke the notion of change through the form or shape of the chalk as whole. I demonstrated this by adjusting/ manipulating the shape of the chalks into crushed pieces or dust, although the reading of the work it could be vice versa too (Figures 37). This disintegrating of form is a reference to the theme of the work, of how education has been threatened due to political violence. In addition, there was no sense of the beginning and the end, a circle of meanings. The work could be read from both ends that created or generated a sense of movement between the piles. The order of reading can also be referenced from dust to form, in a way that references the constructive as the full form of the chalks and the destructive as the chalk is crushed and deformed into powder. In addition the black platform suggests the blackboard.



Figure 37. *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk on black stage.

---

<sup>107</sup> Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 132.



Figure 38. *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk on black stage, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney 2013, installation views.

## STAGE TWO: DISPLAY CHALKS AND BLACK PIGMENT ON THE FLOOR IN A CIRCLE FORMAT

After I presented Stage One at the exhibition *Landlock*, I continued experimenting and investigating how to display the work in different formats. I examined other possibilities and methods of displaying the work, including increasing the amount of chalk. I utilised approximately 13,000 pieces of chalk assembled onto the floor into the shape of a semicircle (Figure 41). At the beginning of the semicircle, I positioned the chalk standing upright (figures 42, 43). Gradually, the vertical position of the chalk begins to collapse until the chalks become horizontal or flattened and then crushed into powder. I made the other half of the circle by the use of black pigment in a flat layer on the floor. The crushed, crumbled and chaotic movement of the chalk evoked for me the harsh reality of the students' condition, their education environments and their struggle due to hostilities against them.

I have utilised contrasting colours, black and white. This contrast of colour is a metaphor for the dramatic theme of the work and emphasises sudden change and contrast between the two colours of black and white. The associations of colour and the use of tonal contrast create a drama, a narrative of change and instability.

This configuration and method of display invites the viewer to engage with the work and experience it physically. They can walk around to experience the work from different perspectives. The process of manipulating the material vocabulary, colour contrast, gesture and flatness, movement and stillness offer a range of experiences and readings for the viewer. These include; fragility, chaotic movement and colour tension contrast.

Artists such as Wolfgang Laib and Richard Long have employed similar methods and processes of displaying installation works on the floor. Each artist has utilised different materials and forms as well as content and context. For example, Wolfgang Laib is a German artist who has employed different materials such as pollens as installation work displayed on the floor of a gallery (Figure 39). Laib has created installations that address the notions of transience and temporality, through materials that are ephemeral in nature. He has created a number of installation works using flower pollen, which he collected himself. He displayed pollen in a thin flat layer in different formats; square, rectangular or in piles.

Similarly, the English artist Richard Long's works included the form of walk, installation sculptures and mud works. During his journeys through the landscapes, he has created ephemeral sculptures from natural materials in the shape of circles or lines and uses photography as a medium to record these works. His works suggest experiences of place and time (Figure 40). He often displays his installation components on the floor in gallery spaces where he arranged natural materials, usually stone or wood.

Looking at the works of the above artists, I have applied similar installation strategies in the space. However in contrast to Laib's and Long's use of natural materials, I have used a man-made cultural object, chalk, as a ready-made object signifying cultural readings and associations.

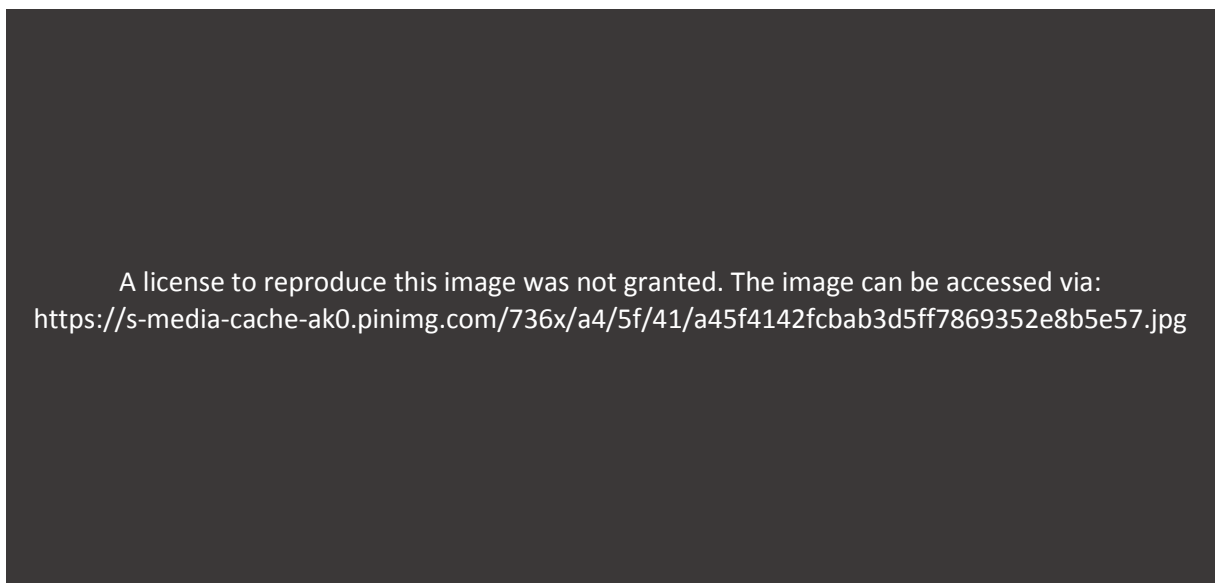


Figure 39. Wolfgang Laib, *Pollen from Hazelnut*, 2013, the atrium of the Museum of Modern Art.



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://www.richardlong.org/Images/2011webimages/bw/circmist.jpg>

Figure 40. Richard Long, *Walking a Circle in Mist*, Scotland, 1986.



Figure 41. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2014, installation views.





Figure 42. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014.



Figure 43. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and black pigment.

### STAGE THREE: VIDEO WORK, TIME AS A MEDIUM AND STRUCTURE

All installation and artworks operate in time as well as space however in this third stage of the project, I employed a time-based medium manifest as video. I have experimented to create or record with a camera a video work of the circle floor installation. "Time has structure; its chief elements in everyday life are duration, speed, rhythm, and direction".<sup>108</sup>

After I installed the work on the floor in a circle in Stage Two, I sought to experiment with the lowering of the camera viewpoint to capture the experience of seeing the work in a different way. When the work is installed on the floor in a space at stage one and two, the spectator experiences the artwork through a bird's eye view; looking down at it toward their feet. In the installation, the spectator moves around the work freely referencing the infinite nature of the circle; there is no beginning or end point. The physicality of material quality and colour contrast, and the notion of change and transience appear to the viewer as whole. Furthermore the work as an installation in stage one and two is static. The spectator moves around the work to experience it from different angles over the time that signifies the spectator's passage moving in time. In contrast when the spectator experiences the video work, she/he becomes static whilst the video imagery moves. The camera mediates how the viewer experiences the work. In this regards the spectator stays still while seeing the work as a moving projection on the surface or through the LCD screen in time.



Figure 44. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2012- 2014, HD Video sound one channel, Length: 4 min 30 sec, still image.

<sup>108</sup> Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, *Themes of Contemporary Art : Visual Art after 1980* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 133.



Figure 45. *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, HD Video sound, installation view.

I have employed a simple approach for recording by positioning the camera at ground level and then moving around the installation slowly with the camera. I have used the humble technique of using a single camera and filmed the work as a continuous event in one take. I have then displayed the raw file as the final outcome or product, without digital manipulation or post-production and montage techniques.

Through the process of recording and making the video work, I was able to shift the viewing perspective of the work, from a bird's eye view into a horizontal viewpoint. This in a sense suggested the feeling of a landscape. The video work starts with the chalk in the state of a standing or vertical position, and then gradually, as the camera pans, they fall in disoriented directions and crumble into dust. The white chalk powder disappears and the flat layer of the black pigment is revealed. It references a type of history that is in decay of transformation of change. Moreover, in the second half of the video work, the foreground of black flat ground appears in a way that evokes a great ambiguity. In the background the chinks appear and disappear vaguely and to some extent appear as a blurry white line. However due to the looped nature of the video we see an ongoing cycle of the chalk's construction and destruction and reformation, a sign perhaps of hope.



Figure 46. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, HD Video, still image.

The video work represents the process of change and transformation from upright to collapsed, from constructive to destructive. I aim to replicate how the political circumstances affect society. At the beginning of the video, the soft light creates a romantic and poetic mood of harmony and as the camera moves along and the chalks begins to fall, the light becomes sharper and more contrasted. This shift in the lighting from soft to harsh is another metaphor that alludes to the mood of the society regarding the theme of the work.

As stated, I positioned the camera onto a flat surface, which I then moved around the artwork. The smooth flow of the camera moving around the installation was disrupted at certain points when the flat surface that the camera was positioned on came into resistance with the floor surface. This created a tension, a shakiness that aims to evoke a feeling of unease; "...artists are controlling, altering, fracturing, and dissolving the structure of time in their work and why".<sup>109</sup>

I disrupted the smooth flow of the camera moving around the work at certain points, to generate a tension that creates a sense of unease in the viewer. This tension has a great presence in the movement of the recording that stops and moves again, a tremulous and shaky movement. In other words, I have manipulated the structure of time, through the

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

speed and rhythm of the recording of the work. This manipulation of time as a medium created a sense of tension and instability in the length of the work. In this regards Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel express that:

Time becomes a medium whenever an artwork is not static but moves and changes... Sometimes the movement is an optical illusion, as in a film, which is really just a sequence of still photographs ("frames") shown in rapid succession. When time is a medium, artists manipulate it much as they manipulate any other malleable material (such as wood, paint, or bronze) and give it form (including shape and size but also duration, speed, and rhythm).<sup>110</sup>

I would also add that time becomes a medium when the artwork of whatever medium causes the viewer to move and change. Additionally, the unstable and wobbly movement has created a great presence of gesture in the work, which expresses the emotion and the context of the work. I have employed this gestural quality of recording through time as a metaphor for interaction and material resistance when the chinks are deformed or crushed.

## **5. TIME AND THE NOTION OF CHANGE PHYSICALLY AND CONCEPTUALLY IN THE WORK**

In this work I have investigated how time can be employed as a medium in order to manifest the notion of change physically and conceptually, through objects, material, and the socio-political context of the work. "Time becomes palpable when experienced through physical objects whose form and meaning are constantly and unstoppably changing".<sup>111</sup> The work focuses on investigating issues of change through the use of contrasting elements including dark and light, softness and hardness, form and deform, knowing and unknowing, hope and destruction, constructive and destructive. Through these contradictory elements, I aimed to draw attention to the subject matter of the work, and at the same time address the notion of change, how things shift from one state to another, for example, from black to white, and from harsh light to soft light. (Please see Chapter One, definition of change).

I have attempted to manifest the concept of transformation in the work, through the use of a selected materiality vocabulary, colour contrast, through the positioning of the chinks rise and fall, and the transformation of nature of the chalk from hard to soft, and the manipulation of the shifting of the light quality from soft to sharp, "As a metaphor for the passage of time...physical as well as conceptual transformations".<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 147.

Nonetheless, in this work the chalk's materiality has not changed. In other words, the materiality of chalk is still the same but the chalk's form has changed or vanished through the process of crushing.

This method of changing forms but not the materiality has been reflected in other artists' works, for example, Hiwa K used a similar process in the project *The Bell*, in which he transformed the form of an object, but not the materiality of the object. He melted broken weapons (metal as material) and then he created a bell from the melted metal. This demonstrated that the materiality has not changed, rather what has changed is the form, from a broken weapon to a bell (please see Chapter Two: 2.4. Hiwa K, p.p. 48-49).

However, in contrast to Hiwa K's project *The Bell*, I employed ordinary everyday objects (chalks) and black pigment and engaged with humble and basic processes of making. Chalk is organic or natural material that has characteristic qualities making it fragile and ephemeral. This ephemerality and fragility has shaped my work as a structure as installation outcome as well as the video work in this project.

### **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT THREE**

In this Project 3 I have focused on developing the installation approach based on my experiences with project one *Hanging Issues*, whereby I used an open space with a floating hung structure to display the work (panels). In project three *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, I developed further the use of structure, the reading and experience of the work in actual time and space and the transformation of actual matter and the found object to employ readings evoking transience. By installing the work on the floor I was able to examine and present the formal elements of the work in different ways that affected the readings. This enabled me to explore and record the installation itself as a video work. Through the video I employed video time as a medium to address the notion of change and ephemerality in context of the theme of the project, and to mediate how the content can unfold through framing and timing.

The knowledge, experiences and methods gleaned from my use of installation, manipulations of materials and the use of video time in Project 3 has informed Project 4, and the use of video-time has informed Project 5. This will be discussed in the following sections.



### 3.5. PROJECT 4: *IRHAL (EXPEL), HOPE AND THE SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT*



Figure 47. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Installation view.

**Title:** *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*

**Year:** 2013-2015 (ongoing project)

**Medium:** Burnt wooden chair, black pigment and charcoal

**Size:** Installation dimensions variable

#### **PROJECT FOUR OVERVIEW**

- INTRODUCTION: *IRHAL (EXPEL), HOPE AND THE SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT*
- THE CONCEPT OF DISPLACEMENT AND EXILE
- PERSONAL AND COMMON EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST AND PRESENT
- THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK AND PROCESS OF MAKING: CREATING THE TRAUMATIC
- OBJECT BY TRANSFORMING THE DOMESTIC OBJECT
- THE ANALYSIS OF THE FORMAL VISUAL VOCABULARY: SIZE AND SCALE, SPACE, COLOUR, LINE, MATERIAL AND SURFACE QUALITY, COMPOSITION AND FORMAT OF DISPLAY
- DISPLAYING TRAUMATIC OBJECTS AS EVIDENCE
- TRANSFORMING THE MUNDANE OBJECT INTO THE UNCANNY TRAUMATIC OBJECT
- CONCLUSION TO PROJECT FOUR

### **INTRODUCTION: *IRHAL (EXPEL)*, *HOPE AND THE SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT***

The work is an installation consisting of over 40 burnt chairs. They are installed as an interlocking pile. The chairs are not joined/fixed but placed on top of one another. Weight and gravity hold them up, forming a solid work that stands in the space. This pile of chairs is situated in the space of a gallery on a dark, flat layer of black pigment, crushed wooden charcoal and fragments of the burnt wooden chairs.

1. The installation can be indoors or outdoors
2. The size approximately is 700 L x 250 W x 270 H cm, however dimensions are variable
3. The chairs are not joined together

This project employs the domestic objects materiality, form, scale, structure, temporality and visual representation as key elements with which to address notions of displacement, absence, loss and exile in the context of socio-political violence.

### **THE CONCEPT OF DISPLACEMENT AND EXILE**

In this project I have used domestic found objects (chairs) as key elements and essential components of my material and formal vocabulary in order to conduct the research. *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement* was informed by the evaluation of the use of object, materials and display techniques of my previous works, in particular the work in Project 3, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*. By evaluating my use of objects, materiality (black pigment), fragility and method of floor installation in space, I considered how I could amplify my use of these elements to create a new work to address the issue of displacement.

*Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement* meditates on displacement, a concept that affects millions of people around the globe who are forced to flee their homes because of political, social, environmental or economic factors.

I have utilised discarded objects (chairs) to explore notions of fragility, uncertainty and limitation that often accompany displacement. I have used these commonplace objects (chairs) as a metaphor for “home and place”. Domestic chairs are objects designed for comfort and relaxation, however I have manipulated and transformed the chairs into dysfunctional objects. The chairs have been burnt and deformed, that became a metaphor for the abandonment of “home and place”.

According to a recent United Nations report, “Nearly 60 million people have been driven from their homes by war and persecution, an unprecedented global exodus that has burdened fragile countries with waves of newcomers and littered deserts and seas with the bodies of those who died trying to reach safety”.<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Somini Sengupta, "60 Million People Fleeing Chaotic Lands, U.N. Says," accessed 28 April, 2016. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/world/60-million-people-fleeing-chaotic-lands-un-says.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/world/60-million-people-fleeing-chaotic-lands-un-says.html?_r=0).



Through this project, I have been able to explore readings offered through the materiality, form and signification of the domestic object. This process enabled me to develop a way to evoke the notion of displacement.

Using a chair in a good condition and situating it in a stable position would generate very different readings from a chair in poor condition; deformed and burnt. This example portrays how process can reveal and carry associations.

The chairs were burnt and transformed into something non-functional. The burnt chairs undermine the feeling of safety and home.

This creates a sense of feeling of vulnerability and absence. It suggests a state of absence and presence and acts as a metaphor for the place and displacement. This work aims to challenge the viewer's preconceptions of domestic artefacts, stability and offers questions to the viewer in regards to "otherness".

### **PERSONAL AND COMMON EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST AND PRESENT**

In this project I have again utilised my own personal experience. Drawing on my own memories in association with dislocation has aided and enhanced my understanding of the difficulties and suffering of individuals who have faced displacement. I aim to extend from my own personal experience and address the broader issues of suffering, disruption and renewal relating to individuals in other societies and places. Throughout the working process I have been able to transform my personal experience into works that have a broader value in the public sphere. I have utilised that experience as a valuable tool to contextualise the issue of dislocation in the frame of collective memories and experiences, in the context of "otherness" rather than self-reference.

Furthermore, throughout the working process, I have been able to use the historical events that I witnessed directly and have personally encountered, for example the mass exoduses of Kurdish refugees in Kurdistan (Kurdistan/Iraq) called "*Rawaka 1991*", (nearly 4 million people were involved) to the border of Turkey and Iran after the First Gulf War in 1991. My family and I remained in the mountains on the border of Iran for over 6 months. The first few months were without even basic facilities, no shelter or tent. Following that experience, I encountered dislocation and exile in Iran, Turkey and then in 1998 I came to Australia as a refugee.

In this project I have not made precise reference to the direct experiences mentioned above. I have tended to use these direct experiences and memories in order to generate works that suggest feelings of displacement, absence, loss and exile in a broader social context. Additionally, I have used my experiences as a starting point to enrich my understanding, in combination with research from a wide range of sources. For instance, in

2015 I undertook research in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to investigate issues of violence and displacement during the Pol Pot regime in 1974-1979. I have also followed the refugee crisis in Australia since I arrived in Australia in 1998, up until the recent days, as well as the recent eruption of the refugee crisis of the Middle East in the global context.

I want to explore the theme of displacement in the context of a wider social equity. However the work will not only highlight the desperation and fragility of displaced individuals, it will also highlight their courage and compassion. In this regard Edward Said wrote:

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons... Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience... Seeing the entire world as a foreign land makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions.<sup>114</sup>

Additionally, the work will be one that uses the redemptive power of art to highlight the human condition, which when under difficult situations requires and seeks hope, renewal and light. Through the process of making, I want to connect different experiences and have drawn from a diverse range of sources such as poetry, philosophy, literature, individual's stories and experiences, photographs, news and other relevant sources and fields of knowledge. I have utilised information from these sources and weaved them into the project to enrich its outcomes as a work of art.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK AND PROCESS OF MAKING: CREATING THE TRAUMATIC OBJECT BY TRANSFORMING THE DOMESTIC OBJECT**

My research continued to be concerned with the characteristic of material vocabulary and form condition and their associated readings, in the context of displacement and exile. I explored how I could articulate and address these ideas through the use of an everyday domestic object (chair). This project extended upon a range of methods, techniques and different ways of display in order to achieve different readings for this project. South African artist William Kentridge says, "In the process of making, a meaning will emerge".<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> Russell Ferguson, *Out There : Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass.: New Museum of Contemporary Art ; MIT Press, 1990), 365.

<sup>115</sup> Harry Swartz-Turflie, "Failing Better: William Kentridge's Drawing Lessons," *Hyperallergic Newsletter*, accessed September 1, 2015. <http://hyperallergic.com/4985/william-kentridge-drawing-lessons/>.

## STAGE ONE: A SINGLE CHAIR

Initially I began experimenting with a single chair, which I found discarded on a street in Melbourne. Through the working process I deformed this chair, through the act of breaking and burning, physically transforming it into a useless object.

Firstly, I dismantled the chair—by breaking off the legs (Figure 48). I then used the legs to prop it back up again in the space. Through this act, the chair became unstable—the broken legs hold it up only temporarily and with the slightest pressure it will collapse. I have employed these physical instable and fragile conditions of the chair as a metaphor or reference for an unstable “Home”. The chair I used was made of wood. Wood as a raw material has a warm and organic feeling, which could be associated with the warmth of homeliness. However through the act of burning the chair transformed into a dysfunctional burnt appearance; “The chair signifies both loss of home and the triumph of memory”.<sup>116</sup> This change or transformation has undermined the feeling of homeliness and warmth, and has replaced it with unhomeliness or unwelcoming and coldness (Figures 48, 49). Once transformed, the chair becomes dysfunctional and can no longer be used as an everyday object in a domestic homely environment.

After this initial exploration, I experimented with the installation of the chair. I covered the floor space with black pigment and positioned the single chair in the centre of this darkened surface (figures 49, 50). The size of the work was approximately 80 H x 250 W x 250 L cm that has created a square format. The work was situated in the middle of the space, which offered the spectator the chance to move freely around the work and encounter/experience it from different angles. It has no sense of physical dangers or overthrowing the viewer. Nevertheless the black pigment on the ground has been accidentally damaged by the viewer’s footsteps occasionally. The installation works as a metaphor. If one attempts to sit on the chair, they will fall into the infinite darkness—in this work they would physically fall onto the dark pigment. It becomes a dark metaphor for “Lost Home”, whose foundations have been destroyed. The space and refuge of the home is destroyed, it is now filled with anxiety, uncertainty and aggression. The material quality of the black pigment on the ground has a deep matt appearance, which creates a sense of silence and absorbency. That has combined with a single deformed chair to generate the presence of absence.

---

<sup>116</sup> Salwa Mikdadi, "The States of Being in Mona Hatoum's Artwork," Darat al Funun, The Khalid Shoman Foundation, accessed June 6, 2015.  
[http://thekhalidshomanfoundation.org/main/activit/curentl/mona\\_hatoum/5.htm](http://thekhalidshomanfoundation.org/main/activit/curentl/mona_hatoum/5.htm).



Figure 48. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2013, installation dimensions variable, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view.



Figure 49. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2014, Dark Horse Experiment Gallery, Melbourne, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view.



Figure Top 50. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2013, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University, burnt wooden chair, black pigment and fine charcoal, Installation view.

Figure Bottom 51. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, (detail), 2013.

## **STAGE TWO: A PILE OF CHAIRS**

After I experimented and evaluated the outcome of Stage One, I sought to take my explorations further by testing the installation in different ways with different structures and formats. I increased the number of chairs in the installation to consist of up to 40 burnt chairs. The chairs were displayed in the format of a pile (Figure 56). I have installed the chairs as an interlocking pile, but without the use of screws or nails to join them together. They were placed on top of one another in a disorientated, chaotic and unbalanced manner, with no specific shape or form. I used the weight balance and gravity as key elements to hold the chairs (Figure 57). Therefore the installation forms and structures are not fixed. This creates a sense of instability and temporality. Each time the work was installed, the form and the structure changes, and could never be the same as previous installs. That is an integral foundation of the work, which further amplifies the theme of displacement, instability and the sense of being unsettled.

These discarded chairs have a presence, metaphorically suggesting ideas of “Home”. Where at home the chair is used as an object to rest and relax, here they are set apart from their usual surroundings. Each chair is burnt, dismantled and piled, feelings and memories of sanctuary are brought into question, objects that once were safe and familiar, are now hostile and unstable.

The complexity of this installation creates intertwining angled forms, underling, cramped and disoriented positions suggestive of vulnerability, fragility and suffering, and perhaps acts as an impermanent monument to the courage and compassion amongst desperation of those displaced. Placed on top of a layer of black pigment and charcoal, the ephemeral nature of these materials evokes the transience of violence and existence itself.

Through the work I want to encounter and challenge the spectator’s perception of a safe place, “Home” and free movement, in order to raise and generate questioning of the idea of safe place, space, displacement, exile and socio-geo-political in context to socio-political issues, which in our current times, are imbued with insecurity and uncertainty.

As is clear by this stage of the dissertation it is my intention to highlight the human condition, the lack of human rights and freedom, in order to seek hope, harmony and a better understanding of what we have in common. This work questions the viewers to consider whether compassion, courage and hope can coexist alongside violence and catastrophe.

The displayed pile of chairs as a collection of objects has an accumulative effect and evokes the notion of collective memory and responsibility. Caterina Albano writes: “This is, for instance, the case of the display of a pile of shoes and suitcases belonging to victims of the concentration camps at the Auschwitz Museum ... In this context, the object acts as an icon that transitions from individual trauma to collective history, from personal pain to public

horror, entangling questions of remembrance and documentation with emotional susceptibility".<sup>117</sup> (Figure 52).

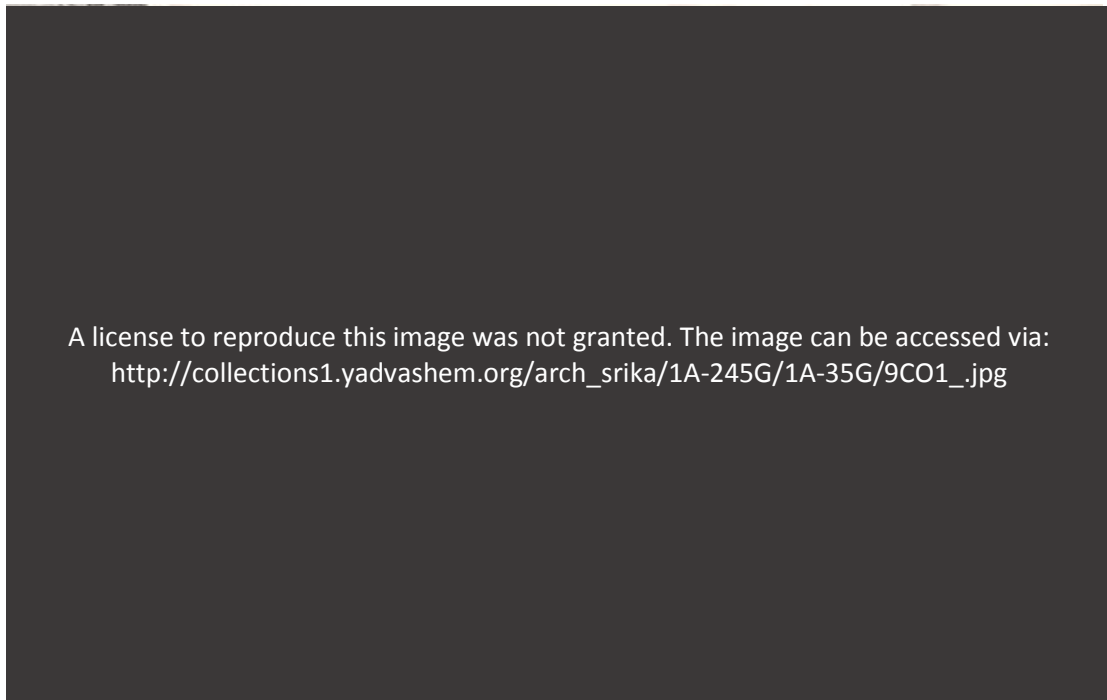


Figure 52. Auschwitz, Poland, A pile of shoes in the museum.

The work as a pile of chairs has enabled me to achieve the transformation from individual to collective; the collective chairs as a pile addressing the complexities of the past and mutely suggest stories through traces of belonging.

The process of interrogating and employing objects (things) in the format of pile or stack has been used by a number of contemporary artists such as Doris Salcedo, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Christian Boltanski.

For example, Doris Salcedo employed chairs as reference to the theme of displacement. Her work *Untitled* (2003) at the 8th International Istanbul Biennial contained approximately 1600 wooden chairs that were piled between two buildings. Salcedo says, "I was visiting the city, and... there were so many ruins in the central area that I started wondering, 'It doesn't make sense, that busy area has so many abandoned buildings.' They were legacies of the violent past, where Jews and Greeks were forced out of their buildings".<sup>118</sup> *'Untitled'* references and responded to specific geo-political historical events. The way Salcedo displayed the chairs creates a sense of disorder, they are simply tumbled together referencing the chaotic experience of being displaced.

---

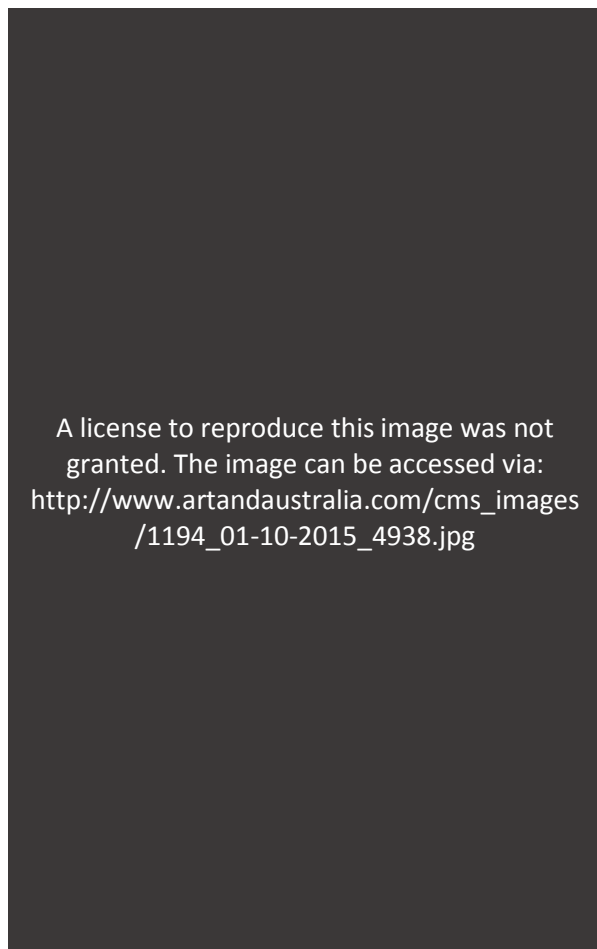
<sup>117</sup> Albano, 94.

<sup>118</sup> Caitlin Dover, "How Artist Doris Salcedo's Practice Quietly Challenges Injustice," *How Artist Doris Salcedo's Practice Quietly Challenges Injustice*, June 29, 2015, accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/how-artist-doris-salcedos-practice-quietly-challenges-injustice>.



Similarly, Felix Gonzalez-Torres has utilised the pile or stack in the display of his work, as a means to generate collaboration and engagement with the public. For example he displayed a pile of candy and printed paper sheets in the space of a gallery and encouraged the viewer to take a piece away with them. This act of invitation and offering the viewers to remove a piece from the work, generates the notion of ephemerality in the loop of disappearance and reappearance. Gonzalez-Torres said of his collaboration with the public, “Without a public these works are nothing, nothing ... I need the public to complete the work”.<sup>119</sup> The direct act of collaboration and engagement with the public has reference to social and political morality.

I have employed the pile or stack format in the display of the chairs in my artwork, but with different processes of making. Through the working process I have manipulated and deformed the chairs and I have installed them in a space that allows the viewer to experience the work from many different angles.



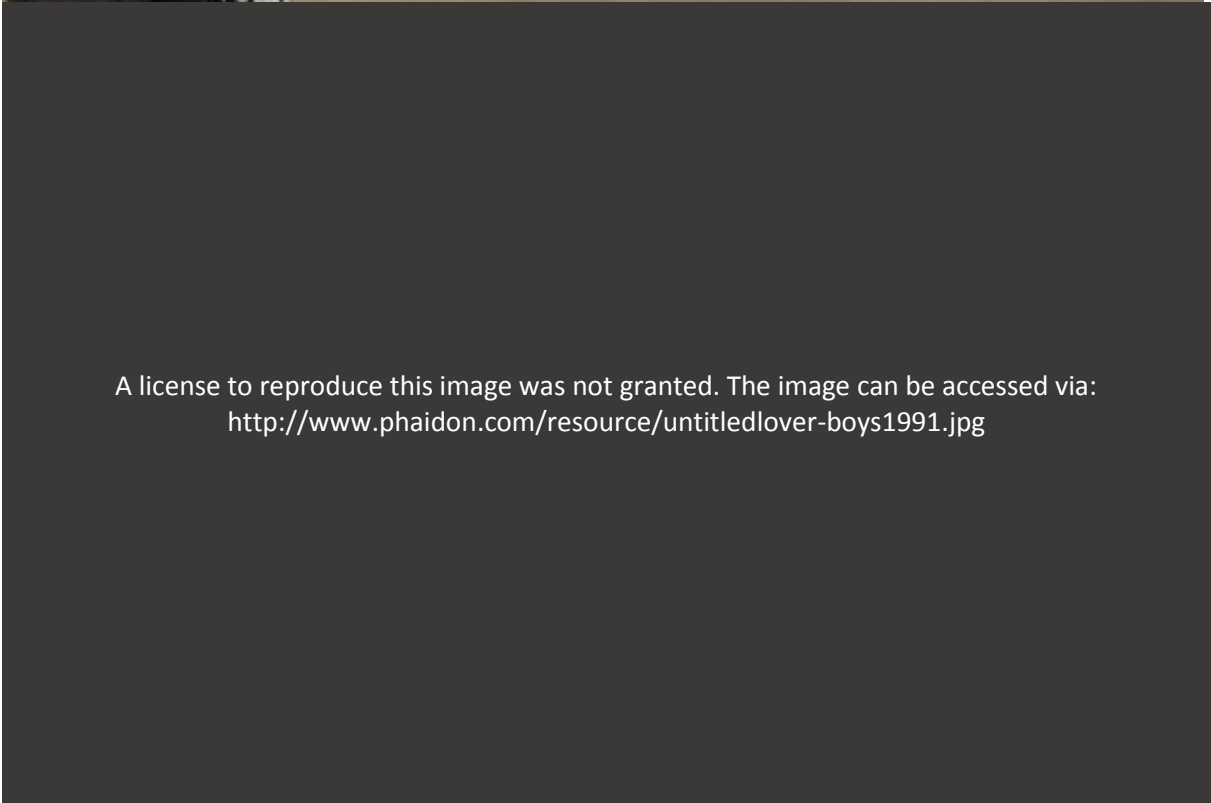
A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
[http://www.artandaustralia.com/cms\\_images/1194\\_01-10-2015\\_4938.jpg](http://www.artandaustralia.com/cms_images/1194_01-10-2015_4938.jpg)

Figure 53. Doris Salcedo, *Untitled*, installation at 8th International Istanbul Biennial, 2003.

---

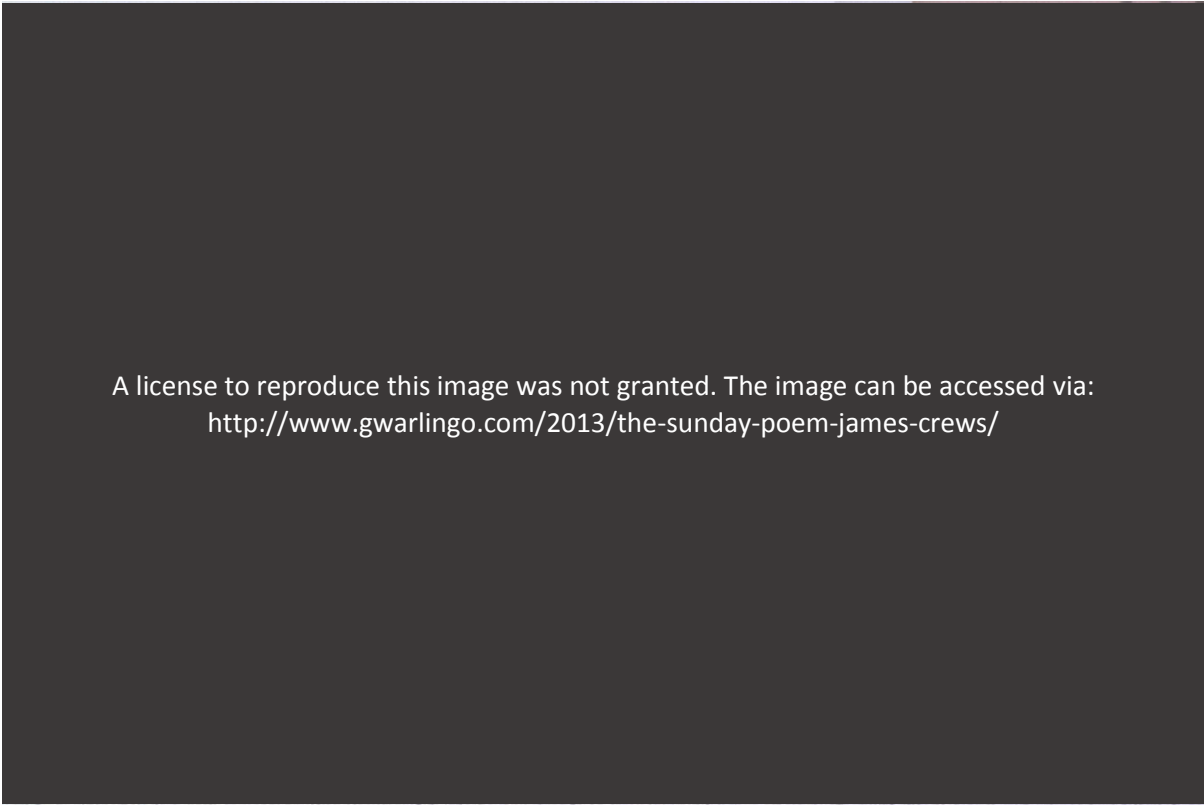
<sup>119</sup> Buskirk, 154.





A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://www.phaidon.com/resource/untitledlover-boys1991.jpg>

Figure 54. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Lover Boys)*, 1991, pile of candy.



A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://www.gwarlingo.com/2013/the-sunday-poem-james-crews/>

Figure 55. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *untitled*, 1991, viewers are encouraged to take a page of the artwork with them.



Figure 56. *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, "Art for Social Change" Exhibition, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view.



Figure 57. *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University Installation view.



## **VISUAL VOCABULARY OF FORMAL ANALYSIS: SIZE AND SCALE, SPACE, COLOUR, LINE, MATERIAL AND SURFACE QUALITY, COMPOSITION AND FORMAT OF DISPLAY**

In an interview with Janine Antoni, Mona Hatoum says, "I wanted to explore the complexities through the juxtaposition of several formal and visual elements that create paradoxical layers of meaning".<sup>120</sup>

The formal elements mentioned above contribute important readings to the work. Throughout the working process and the development of the project, they have been employed to suggest balance and imbalance, beauty and ugliness. The spectators encounter the work through their composition, which enables the timing and unfolding of content. They play an important role in engaging the viewer with the complexity of the work.

## **THE COMPOSITION AND FORMAT OF DISPLAY OF INSTALLATION: TEMPORALITY AND CHANGEABLE FORM AND STRUCTURE**

In this work I have employed two major variations of compositional structures.

Firstly, I started with Stage One, which has been described in detail on pages 103-105—a single deformed chair.

In Stage Two, I used over 40 deformed chairs, which changed the scale, format and the composition of display. This scale variable (700 L x 270 H x 220 W cm) created a long rectangular shape format, which could be likened to the shape of a burial ground or a reference to the ground of conflict zone and trauma space. This has been described in detail on pages 100-102.

The installation's structure/form in both variations does not remain intact; it changes with every installation, and in a sense the previous structure/form of the installation has vanished, it literally never happens in exactly the same form again. In conversation with Carlos Basualdo, Doris Salcedo has said: "the work and dismantling the structure of an installation is a painful process but there's nothing I can do ... Time moves on, and that is a challenge because once the installations have been dismantled, as far as I'm concerned the initial work vanishes and a new one appears".<sup>121</sup>

The temporary nature of the work is an important aspect. The ephemeral quality state of the work emphasises the transitory of coming into being and disappearing. This notion is formed by the philosophy of Mulla Sadra's *the Notion of Change* (Please see Chapter One). This transitory nature of the work *Irhal*, has a sense of the momentary and of dislocation.

---

<sup>120</sup> Janine Antoni, "Mona Hatoum," BOMB Magazine, accessed 2 April, 2016.  
<http://bombmagazine.org/article/2130/mona-hatoum>.

<sup>121</sup> Salcedo et al., 32.

## CHANGE AND THE VOCABULARY OF MATERIALS AND THE QUALITIES OF SURFACES

### WOOD

Wood is the primary material for this installation work. All the chairs included in the work are wooden chairs, and this extends to some parts of the base/ground of the work, which consists of charcoal and residue of burnt wood (Figure 58). The choice of utilising wooden chairs is based on the material quality of wood, and the act of burning as the process evolved from project two *Past in the Present*, where I used burning (as method) and smoke (as material).

However in this work *Irhal* the burning process responds to the material quality of wood. Wood has a range of qualities (raw, organic, smooth, warm and to some extent malleable). Through the act of burning the chairs, the material quality (wood) is transformed into charcoal or ash. In other words, the materiality (of wooden chairs) transformed from one state into another state (charcoal or ash). Obviously this transformation also generated new characteristic material qualities (charcoal or ash) and therefore new readings (i.e. unliveable, dark, gloomy, toxic, rough, unbendable, falling apart, run-down and dusty). In this regard Kurdish poet Sherko Bekas wrote in his book *A Horse from Flowers Leaves*:

You just ask the ash  
How the flowers got murdered  
How the water had drowned  
How the colours got burned  
In this exile  
And how the snow had perished?<sup>122</sup>

The chairs as a pile become a metaphor for a commemorative structure; the chairs represent the living environments of the people. The piling of the chairs into this format and the process of burning have transformed the chairs to reveal new conditions, forms, meaning, values and materiality (fractured, mangled, corroded, chipped, rotten, shattered and rough). The chairs as commonplace objects offering comfort and rest have been converted to frightening or traumatic objects. Additionally the burning process has caused the chairs to share the same fate and transformed them into the same colour (dark). They “reflect fragilities, fractures, and precarious states of affairs, courage as much as resignation, fortitude and the confession of weakness, the urge to give shape and the experience of destruction”.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Sherko Bekas, *A Horse from Flowers Leaves*, (Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan: Sardam Publishing House 2015), 60.

<sup>123</sup> Phyllida Barlow et al., *Displaced Fractures : On the Break Lines of Architecture and Its Bodies = Über Die Bruchlinien Von Architekturen Und Ihren Körpern* (Zürich; Munich, Germany; New York, NY: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst ; Siemens Stiftung : Distributed by JRP/Ringier ; USA [Distributed by] D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2011), 30.



Figure 58. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, (detail), 2015.



## ASH

Another element of material process in the work is ash or dust. I have used the remnants of burnt wooden chairs for the dark layer on which the piled chairs are placed. The material quality of ash offers contradictory readings; on the one hand it is warm, organic, fragile, tangible, soft and light and on the other hand the ash is a reminder or evokes the trace/remnant of the act of burning that creates destruction and disappearance. Burning has an energy that can be positive or negative.

The process of burning wooden chairs changes them into charcoal or ash. As a result of this change, the ash exists, but the wood has vanished, (Please see Chapter One: 1.2. Definition of Change, pages 24-25). The process of burning, of sudden change has transformed the solid form of wood into a vanished form or (formless) as ash (Figure 59). This suggests another reference to the notion of “Home” and displacement in context of political violence.

These physically eroded burnt chairs reference or project the idea of the destructive force and vanished “Home”, regardless of different geo-political locations. To me this signifies a sense of the common universality of the subject matter. Nonetheless this work is not focusing only on the destruction of objects (chairs), but through the very act of making offers a type of redemptive impulse suggesting resurrection and transformation.



Figure 59. *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, (detail), 2015.

## **LINES AND THE CHAOTIC MOVEMENTS OF DISPLACEMENT**

In this work, lines play an important role. The physicality of gesture and visual appearance of the lines has created a sense of dynamic movement into the work. I have emphasised certain characteristic qualities of line conditions (bold, heavy, broad, thin and thick, straight and curved, short and long). These sorts of lines are embedded in the work creating a range of gesture and energies. These can be grouped into three categories of the lines: "1- vertical lines generate a feeling of strength and upward movement, 2- horizontal lines indicate calm or silence, 3 - Diagonal lines express vitality and movement".<sup>124</sup>

In the work I have employed two types of line: 1- network lines, 2- knot lines. Both types "the lines with movement and connection"<sup>125</sup> become metaphors for the condition of displacement. The viewer can observe and experience the change and flux of the lines, when they move around the work. The lines generate physical visual states of flux or transformation, appearing and disappearing, emerging and dissolving, connecting and reconnecting or disconnecting. These become obvious and emerge through the process of looking and moving around the work.

Additionally, the lines create a sense of disorientation; lines that combine and disintegrate that create broken, interrupted and disturbed movements. Imtiaz Dharker says, "The line for me whether the line of a drawing or the line of poem... Is always been about black and white, a mark on emptiness presents and absences, a human voice on silence, footprints on snow".<sup>126</sup>

The work highlights the function of lines to create movement and chaotic directions of the line that in turn generate tension and emotion. "Most importantly, these lines are knotted together... to form a circuit that is perpetually on the point of closure...the means of togetherness".<sup>127</sup> In addition the lines reveal positive and negative space of the work (figures 60, 61). The lines are constantly interrupted by other lines. The spectators are able to walk around the entire installation in the space—with each step new and different parts of the works are revealed. Through this temporal process of looking, of moving through time and space, I hope to offer the viewer a diversity of experiences and readings to become apparent.

---

<sup>124</sup> Palmer, 69.

<sup>125</sup> Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (New York, NY: Routledge 2015), 5-6.

<sup>126</sup> The Forum: BBC World Service Online, "Lines," BBC World Service Online accessed 27 April, 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02bggnr>.

<sup>127</sup> Ingold, 6.





Figure 60. Irhal (Expel), *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University Installation view.

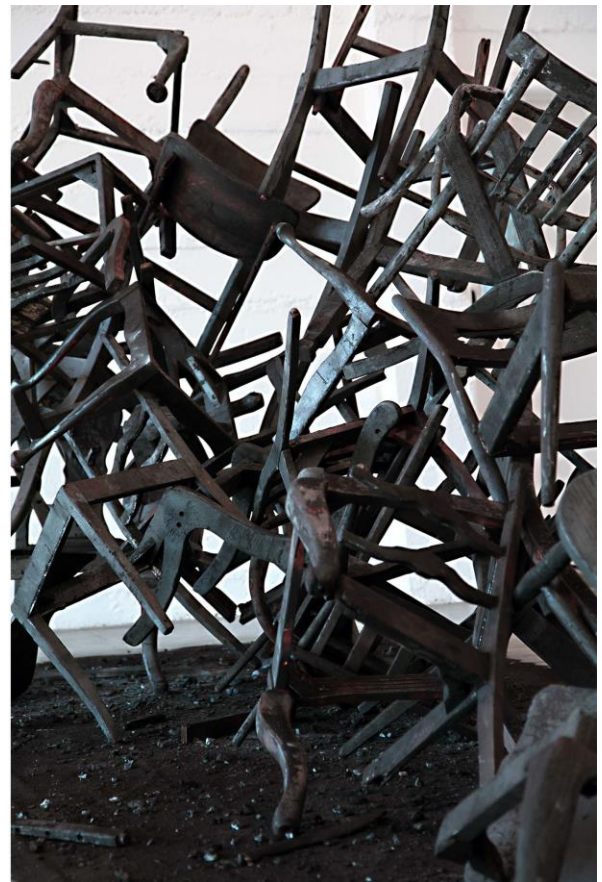


Figure 61. Irhal (Expel), *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, (details) 2015.

## **DISPLAYING TRAUMATIC OBJECTS AS EVIDENCE AND A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

In March 2015, I went to Phnom Penh, Cambodia and undertook fieldwork to explore and study the history of socio-political trauma from 1975 to the end of 1979. I spent several days at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (S-21), and additionally visited the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek. During my fieldwork in the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, I encountered and was confronted with many different objects including tools, domestic objects, kitchen utensils, furniture and clothes. These objects have been used for the purposes of torture and punishment of the victims who were interred in the building during the Pol Pot regime from 1975 to 1979.

On the ground level of Building A, there are a number of interrogation rooms which are furnished, each with a school desk and a chair facing a rusted bedframe with metal chains at each end. The beds in each room are mundane objects of domestic life turned into instruments of torture, punishment and in some cases for killing (Figures 62, 63 and 64).

Today, these rusty metal bed frames, along with the other tools and equipment in the building are displayed as a reference to the dark and traumatic history. These objects (as Things) are witness to and attached with the agony and suffering of the victims. Of all the objects, these rusty metal bed frames left the biggest impression upon me. They were once a common-place bed offering rest and comfort for our bodies. But for the victims of the building S-21, these beds were the instruments of torture, suffering and death—a sinister contrast to their original purpose.

My experience at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21 was deeply depressing, painful and emotional. It created flash backs for me and revived the memory of the building “Amna Suraka” in Sulaimani, Kurdistan. The building used to be a former Ba'ath intelligence headquarters during the Saddam Hussein regime from the 1980s to 1991. The building “Amna Suraka” was a place for interrogation, torture, punishment and killing.

I learnt much at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21 and the Killing Fields Museum. Also I experienced and confronted a new way by which those everyday objects, including the beds had been used and therefore became loaded with pain and suffering, “And thus these materials have strong associations with a specific historical time (and embody that time in their physical presence). Relics have the power to evoke memories and temporal reflections”.<sup>128</sup>

This experience re-enforced my appreciation of the power of everyday objects to generate content both positive and negative. As a result I have researched and integrated how I could use domestic objects in my work in light of these experiences in both the museums in Cambodia to reveal socio-political content, but in my case engaging with the different context of displacement and exile.

---

<sup>128</sup> Robertson and McDaniel, 162.





Figure 62. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015.



Figure 63. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015.



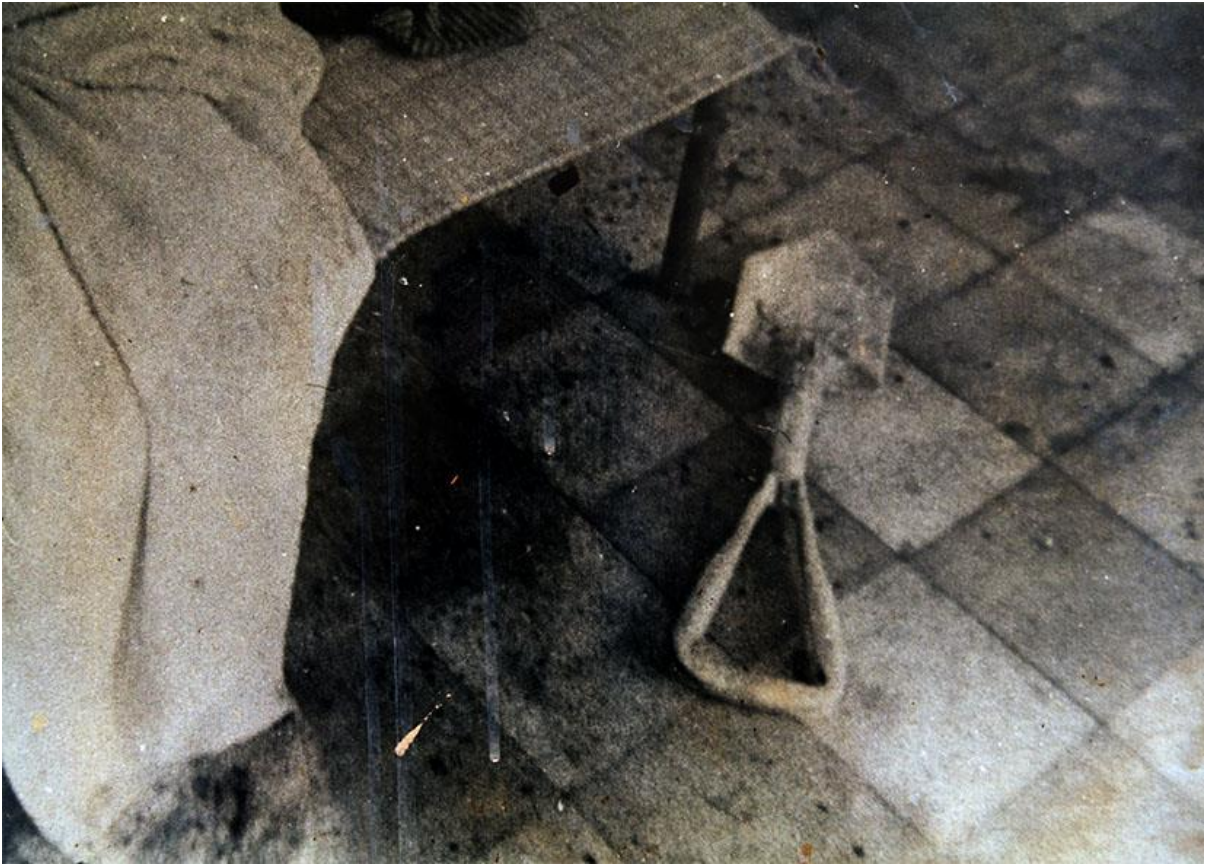


Figure 64. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015, objects.



Figure 65. Rushdi Anwar, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum S-21, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2015.

## TRANSFORMING MUNDANE OBJECT INTO UNCANNY TRAUMATIC OBJECT

The chairs have a great association and reference to the domestic environment. The chairs as objects have accumulated the significance of the past. They are loaded with personal and collective memories. The chairs (as Things) are situated in place and time, therefore they are witnesses associated with a specific historical time and location as found objects have survived. "The surviving thing seems to provide direct evidence that the person or event it was associated with really existed".<sup>129</sup> Additionally in this work, the chairs as commonplace objects are tangible proofs of the past. They signify and resonate the collective or shared experiences of "Home" as living environments, and absence and loss of that environment.

As stated above in this work, I have manipulated the chairs through a working process. As a result they have changed or turned them into dysfunctional objects or traumatic uncanny objects. They have even become physically threatening: "The uncanny object that exposes the politics of terror".<sup>130</sup> This is a reference in my case to the fragility and abject nature of the transformed objects.

Additionally, in the work I have emphasised on the purposes and the meaning of the objects in light of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, I've drawn on his notion of the usefulness of object or thing "objectless or thingness" and how the artist can manipulate or utilise the materiality and form of object, in order to reveal the "Truth" (Please see Chapter One: 1.5. Earth and World, in Context of Revealing the Truth, page 31).

In this work, I have investigated how the purpose and meaning of objects change into contradictory or traumatic objects through the process of making and manipulation. This process of interrogating and utilising commonplace objects, and changing them into uncanny traumatic objects has been employed by other artists. Again I would like to acknowledge the usefulness of the work of Mona Hatoum to my thinking.

In her work *Untitled* (wheelchair), 1998, Hatoum has attached sharp knife blades to the handles of a wheelchair. Again she has manipulated the form of the wheelchair, through an industrial process. The wheelchair's state has transformed into uncanny traumatic object. In this regards Elizabeth Manchester has observed that:

Here the wheelchair itself provides a harsh alternative to its normal counterpart, since it is entirely made of polished metal, replacing surfaces which are normally padded and soft with chill steel. The knife blades transform it into a vehicle of perverse torture which will lacerate the hands of anyone foolish enough to take a hold of it. The potential relationship of love and support, for which the wheelchair is a metaphor, has become one of abuse in which both parties are the victims. In the

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Albano, 167.

scenario it suggests, the person who needs care and who is dependent on another in order to move is forced to injure the person who helps him.<sup>131</sup>

The work underlines a dangerous and torturous condition, referencing displacement and anguish. It speaks of “those situations that have no ability to communicate about extremes of fear or pain”<sup>132</sup> in context of the social and political concerns.

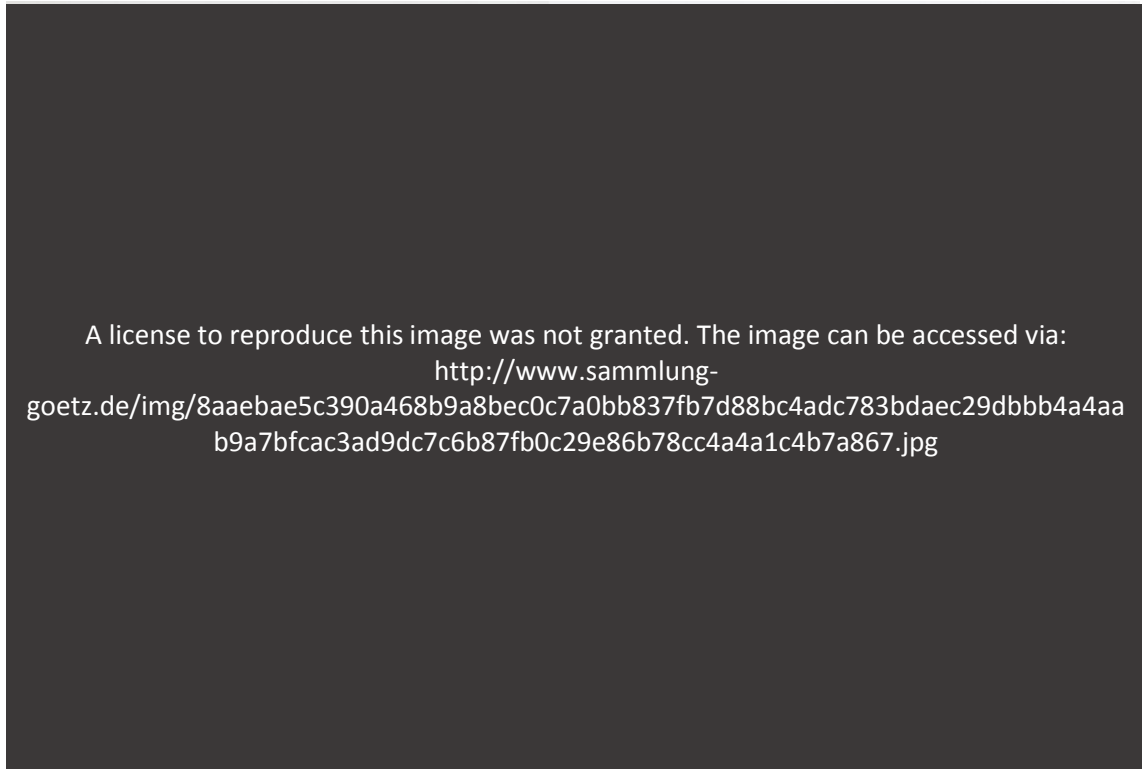


Figure 66. Mona Hatoum, *Untitled (Wheelchair)*, 1998.

## CONCLUSION TO PROJECT FOUR

Project Four is the culmination of my research into the signification of materiality in the form of a site sensitive installation. Here I investigated the use of layered structures and superimposition, the time of reading and experience in actual time and space and the transformation of actual matter and the found object. The next project investigates juxtapositioning as structure, time, political content and my use of video (which started in Project Three) to mediate how we experience materiality.

---

<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Manchester, "Mona Hatoum: Untitled (Wheelchair) 1998 " Tate Gallery, accessed 26 April, 2016. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hatoum-untitled-wheelchair-t07497/text-summary>.

<sup>132</sup> Antoni, "Mona Hatoum".

### 3.6. PROJECT 5:

#### STAGE ONE: *FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT*



Figure 67. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015.

**Title:** *Facing living: The Past in the Present*

**Year:** 2015

**Medium:** HD video sound installation, one channel

**Video Length:** 12 min 30 sec

#### STAGE TWO: *FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER*



Figure 68. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2015.

**Title:** *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*

**Year:** 2014 - 2015

**Medium:** Metal and paint

**Size:** Installation dimensions variable.



## **PROJECT FIVE OVERVIEW:**

- **INTRODUCTION PROJECT FIVE: *FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT AND FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER***
- **THE BACKGROUND TO THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT FIVE**
- **DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT AND CONTEXT THE PROCESS OF MAKING**
- **STAGE ONE: *FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT*; CIRCLING THROUGH**
- **CONSTRUCTING AND DECONSTRUCTING, GESTURE AND TRANSIENT ACTIONS**
- **“MATERIAL MEMORY” OF TANGIBLE MATERIAL**
- **EPHEMERAL ACTIONS AND ENCOUNTER WITH FORM AND MATERIAL**
- **MAGAM SOUND, EMOTIONAL CONTENT**
- **STAGE TWO: *FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER***
- **PRESENTING INTANGIBLE EPHEMERAL ACTIONS THROUGH TANGIBLE FORM AND**
- **MATERIALS**
- **CONCLUSION TO PROJECT FIVE**

## **INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT FIVE: *FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT, FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER*:**

Project 5 consists of two stages. In this project I discuss two works addressing how I have utilised different media (video performances, sculptures and installation) and materials in each stage to address content and its context.

Stage One consists of a video-sound work *Facing Living: The Past in the Present*. I employed video-time as a medium to record my performance/action of constructing and deconstructing a printed photo image on paper. The video work's length is 12 minutes 30 seconds. It is a one channel HD video sound installation.

Stage Two consists of a number of uncanny sculpture objects, entitled: *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, displayed in a line format horizontally on a wall. The materiality of this work includes metal and paint.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF PROJECT FIVE**

The initial ideas behind this work are based on my personal experiences and particular socio-geopolitics historical events in Iraq and the Middle East. At the beginning of 2004, I went back to visit Kurdistan/Iraq. It was my first visit since I left the country in 1997. It was the epoch of the post-Saddam regime. At that time, there were campaigns for the general election in 2004. It was the first democratic election in the history of the country. The citizens were very hopeful that the new Iraqi Government and its leadership would fulfill their hopes and dreams including freedom. Moreover, political parties and their leaders



were using slogans such as “Iraq of Hope and Peace” in their political speeches and propaganda; that was how the new Iraq was going to be.

Nevertheless, every new government established since, has not yet delivered their promises of freedom, hope and peace. Citizens are still living under the shadow of the past. Therefore, every time a new government is formed and the leadership changes, citizens raise their hopes, yet once more another disappointment emerges. The new epoch of modern Iraq (post-Saddam regime), in a sense still functions in the shadow of the Saddam era. Similarly, this situation (hope turning to disappointment) is reflected during the “Arab Spring” in other Middle Eastern countries, in fact the current crises of socio-political landscape in the region is witness to this situation. As Doris Salcedo states:

I believe war is the main event of our time. War is what defines our lives... it creates its own laws. War forces us to generate ethical codes which exclude whole parts of the population; once this happens, we can attack and destroy them because they are no longer viewed as human, and we have used these false ethics as a tool to expel people from humankind. We see civil wars happening everywhere, every day. We read about these terrible events that shape the way we live. What I am trying to show in my work is that war is part of our everyday life.<sup>133</sup>

In Project 5, *Facing Living: The Past in the Present* and *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, evoke the socio-political conditions and turmoil of a country, ruined by wars, conflicts and sectarian violence. They evoke the stories of political leaderships of the state and power struggles among the political factions and parties. Additionally, the works underline the traces of the past in the present time. These works deal with traces of spaces occupied by aggression, violence and hostility that generate uncertainty and instability. Consequently, the imposed devastation and gloomy situations are reflected in many aspects of these societies.

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT AND CONTEXT: THE PROCESS OF MAKING:**

The development of this project evolved from considerations of a section in project 2 *Past in the Present*, in which I employed techniques of crumbling and folding printed photographs, and then unfolded and re-photographed them again (Figures 69, 70). I aimed to re-present the quality of the ephemeral gesture in these works as performance. I wished them to become actions that are caused through the process of manipulating tangible forms and materials of objects. I investigated this in the following two stages:

1. Presenting form, material, and the process of making, that generated ephemeral actions, by recording and presenting the whole process as a video work.
2. Presenting the intangible and the gesture of ephemeral actions through texture and

---

<sup>133</sup> Susan Sollins, "Doris Salcedo: Variations on Brutality," Art21.org, accessed 15 January, 2016. <http://www.art21.org/texts/doris-salcedo/interview-doris-salcedo-variations-on-brutality>.

gesture of tangible objects.

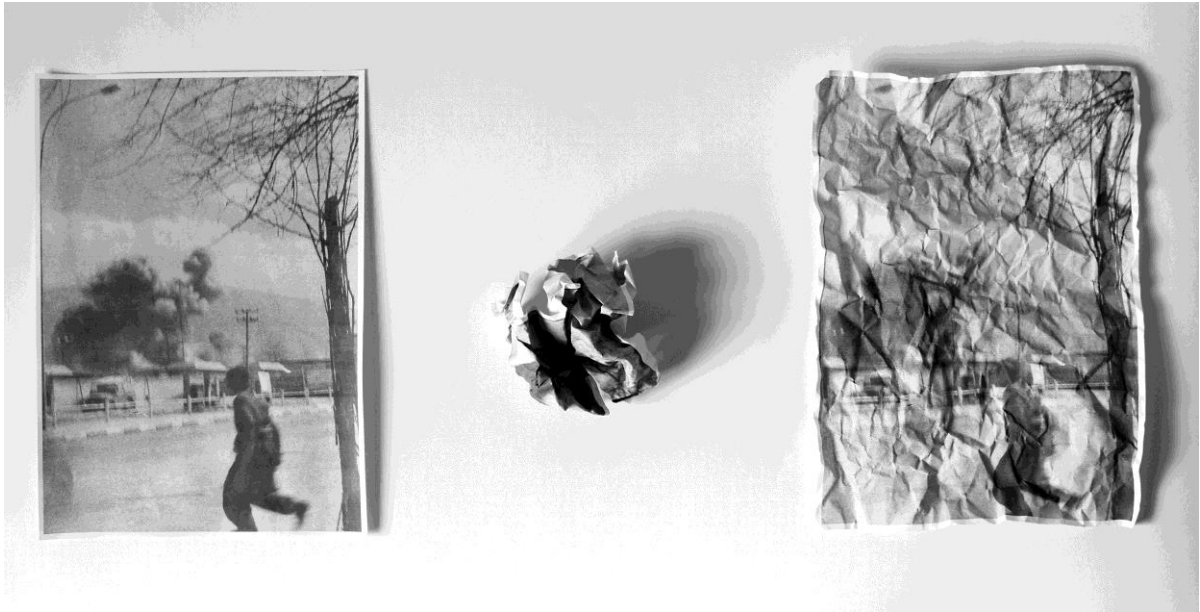


Figure 69. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012- 2013.



Figure 70. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012- 2013.

**STAGE ONE: *FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT*, CIRCLING THROUGH  
CONSTRUCTING AND DECONSTRUCTING, GESTURE AND TRANSIENT ACTIONS:**

My research continued exploring the specifics of material vocabulary and form and their associated readings. This work evokes the notion of change through the medium of video and employs the time and performance as mediums to deal with the concept of looping in the circle of appearing and disappearing in the context of the project's theme. I questioned myself as to which materials to select and utilise and how the material vocabulary and forms will address the notions of the project.

In the work *Facing Living: The Past in the Present*, I utilised a printed photograph portrait of Saddam Hussein on paper. My aim and objective are not politically driven as I have not tried to generate political judgments in this work. However, the context of this project is based on real political and social upheavals that rise from historical events. As artist Richard Long states, "I use the world as I find it".<sup>134</sup> I too have utilised what I have found and reflected on and responded to the themes accordingly.

The work in Stage One consists of hybrid processes and media. I have combined aspects of a range of media and materials including: printed photography, masking tape, stage, camera, sound/music, performance actions, time and a part of my body. The production of this stage is a video work the length of which is 12 minutes 30 seconds, HD video sound installation one channel.

The video work started by showing a crumple paper situated on a dark background (Figure 71), and then two hands pick up the crumbled paper piece, and started to tear and destroy it, through performative actions of crumbling, tearing, stumbling, dissecting and destroying (Figure 72, 73 and 75). After that, the fractured crumbled papers are left on the stage. After a few seconds the two hands appear again and start to unfold the broken crumbled paper pieces; in a sense searching through and trying to match the broken paper fragments. At that moment, through the process of matching, gradually, fragments of an image of a face appear. When the matching of the fractured fragments of image is completed, the two hands put them back together with dark masking tape. When the taping process is finished the two hands, continue to chip, to tear and to destroy the re-constructed image again. This process of constructing and deconstructing is repeated over and over until the photographic image is completely covered in darkness (Figure 74).

The whole process of performative actions of deconstructing and constructing the fragmented fractures of an image, signifies the narrative of looping and recycling violence and trauma, and the process of forming and deforming previous fragments.

---

<sup>134</sup> William Cook, "Richard Long Interview: 'I Was Always an Artist, Even When I Was Two Years Old'," *The Spectator*, accessed 29 May, 2016. <http://www.spectator.co.uk/2015/08/richard-long-interview-i-was-always-an-artist-even-when-i-was-two-years-old/>.



Figure 71. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, HD video sound installation, one channel, length: 12 min 30 sec, still image video.

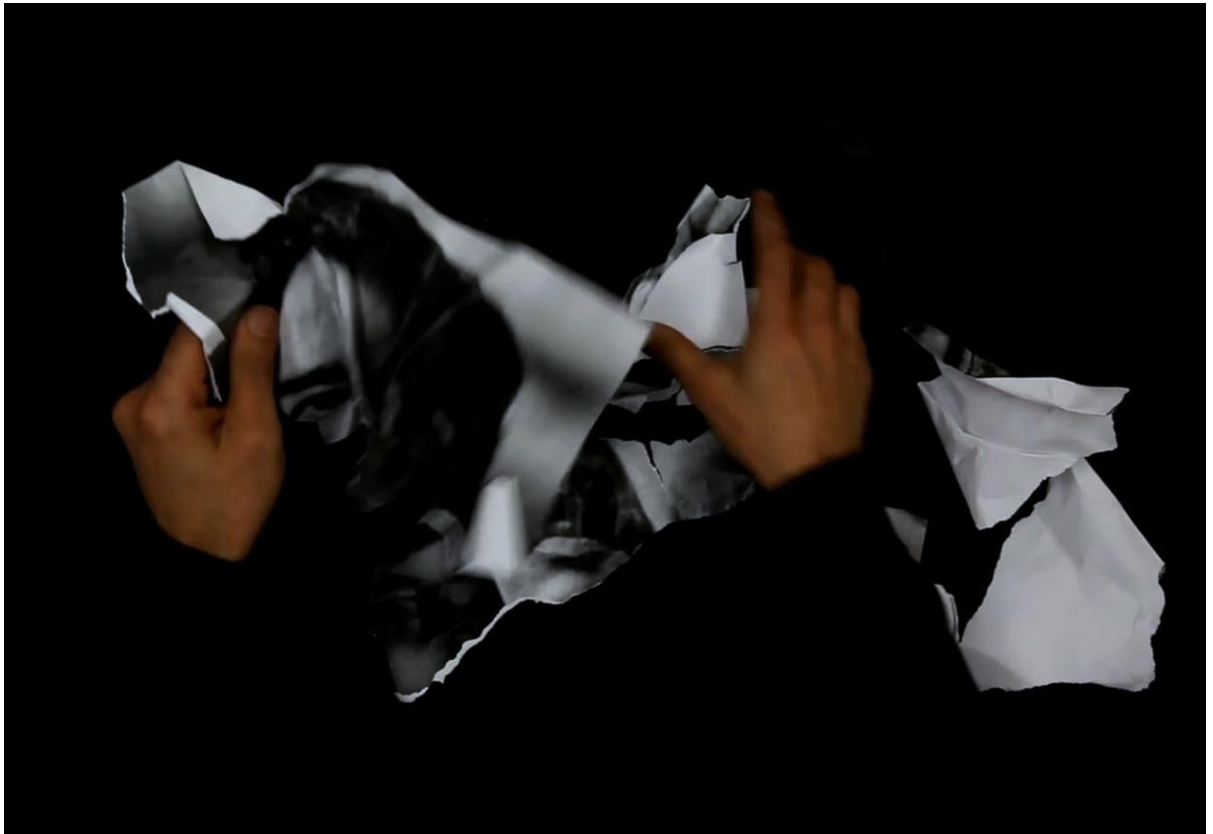


Figure 72. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, still image video.



Figure 73. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, still image.



Figure 74. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, still images

### **“MATERIAL MEMORY” OF TANGIBLE MATERIAL**

In Stage One, I employed physical tangible materials: printed photographic image and masking tape paper. Here, paper as a tangible material went through a dramatic process of transformation and sudden change (please see Chapter One: 1.2. Definition of Change, instantaneous change). While recording the performative actions, I manipulated the photographic image (paper) to rend, fracturing, ripping, shattering, fragmenting ruining it as a solid whole object. The “material memory”<sup>135</sup> as a result of these actions is expressed through the remains of the fractured paper. These actions impacted on the delicate quality of paper, accumulated by its fractured remains: “memory settles onto material, resting in the document, the statement as spoken, written, or remembered. It clings to the surfaces of bodies, materials, and objects”.<sup>136</sup> This process replicates the theme of this work. People who live in places of turmoil such as Iraq, are impacted by socio-political violent events. These events are then archived and accumulated in the memories of the people and landscapes. These events become collective memories that are also reflected on the surface of the living environment. The repeated acts of political aggression and violence, one after another, create a cycle of trauma and inhumanity in the socio-political system.

I demonstrate this theme by deforming and reforming the paper fragments, through the process of transformation on a looping mode during the entire length of the video work. Additionally, the transformation on the looping mode of the video enabled me to employ contradictory functions including: deformation and reformation, disappearance and re-appearance, construction and deconstruction. Through this process the form of the paper has changed, yet its materiality is still the same and has not changed. This method of the changing of forms and not of the materiality has also been reflected in Chapter Three; Project 3. This process references the theme of this project, which is while the political system and the politicians’ faces change over time, the political mentality (as substance) does not change, and it still remains in the shadow of the past.

### **EPHEMERAL ACTIONS AND ENCOUNTER WITH FORM AND MATERIAL**

I have examined the multiplicity of temporality and transience through the vocabulary of tangible materials. The printed photo imagery and gestural quality of ephemeral actions are mediated via the linear time of video recording to address the notion of transience and change. The materials (paper and tape) and the performance actions that resonate temporality have been embedded in this work. The process of experiencing and seeing the work by the viewer, through the screen or projection, also happens in actual time and space, which also echoes temporality. The project’s themes are addressed conceptually and

---

<sup>135</sup> Monica E. McTighe, *Framed Spaces: Photography and Memory in Contemporary Installation Art* (Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 18.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

physically by demonstrating the notion of change and temporality through the medium of video, using time and performance to trace the circular loop of appearing and disappearing. For the making of *Facing Living: The Past in the Present*, I employed my body (hands) to capture time and performance, and to address the notion of transient and ephemerality. "Performance's only life is in the present ... disappears into memory".<sup>137</sup> This work preserved performative actions (performances), and presented the tangible materials (printed photo on paper and tape), through the video work. Rebecca Schneider expressed the usefulness of the recording process: "...in privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain, do we ignore other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently".<sup>138</sup>

The work emphasised the presence of ephemeral gestures. I focused on gestures of temporal actions that lead to alterations of the form of tangible materials. That alteration is signified, through the gradual transformation of the printed photographic image into a fragmented dark surface, resulting in a transformation from representation (imagery) into non-representation (abstraction) or the movement from the light of photography to the darkness of the tape.

The photographic image did not disappear into nothing. In fact it is concealed underneath the dark masking tape. The fragmentation of the photo image still exists. It is there; the remains of previous elements are still there. This suggests the past exists in the present. In other words: *Facing Living: The Past in the Present*. "In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay".<sup>139</sup>

The thought of transience as a temporal medium in this project is shaped by theories of Mulla Sadra (Chapter One page 24). The transient condition is present in the media and the materials of the work (Figure 75), "temporal medium-but a temporal medium in the crease or fold of its own condition".<sup>140</sup> The form of the ruined and eroded medium evokes the narrative of destruction that has a great presence physically and conceptually in this work: "The ruin comes to be experienced, not as a [sic] temporally emplaced, but haunted. [...] The ruin is not the same as its previous (active) incarnation. Now, an altered place emerges, which retains the shadow of its old self, but simultaneously radically destabilizes that presence".<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.

<sup>138</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 98.

<sup>139</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: NLB, 1977), 177-78.

<sup>140</sup> Schneider, "Performing remains art and war in times of theatrical reenactment", 89.

<sup>141</sup> Dylan Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay : Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 131.



Appearing and disappearing plays a key role here; temporalities of gestural performative acts tend to disappear from the moment they appear. This is amplified through the fragility of the material quality of the paper and tape. In a sense it is this gestural quality that has created a sense of arena. In this regards Harold Rosenberg in his essay "*The American Action Painters*" described that the support and media (materials) created "an arena in which to act".<sup>142</sup>



Figure 75. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, still image video.

---

<sup>142</sup> Barbara A. MacAdam, "Top Ten Artnews Stories: 'Not a Picture but an Event'," *Art News*, accessed 29 May, 2016. <http://www.artnews.com/2007/11/01/top-ten-artnews-stories-not-a-picture-but-an-event/>.



## MAQAM SOUND, EMOTIONAL CONTENT

*Maqam* in Arabic means place, it is a melodic musical system. *Maqam* extends through the Middle East. It spans across countries of Western and Central Asia, North Africa and North India.<sup>143</sup> In this work *Facing Living; The Past in the Present*, I used traditional music in the background, “Iraqi Maqam” by Munir Bashir. The choice is “Due to the wide distribution and popularity of their recordings, the tradition of classical Iraqi music best known outside its own borders is the solo ‘oud school of Munir and Jamil Bashir’”.<sup>144</sup> *Maqam* has deep roots in the culture and the music history of Iraq, “Iraqi maqam is a remarkably cosmopolitan musical tradition”.<sup>145</sup>

I employed music (*Maqam*) as a medium in that it constitutes the interweaving of time through emphases on ephemerality, repetition and looping. I focused on the features of *Maqam* functions and rhythm. In general, the structural systems of *Maqam* are associated with 1- the emotional mood and 2- time. These are the two core elements of *Maqam*.

*Maqam* structure is generally a combination of simplicity and complexity, creating a characteristic quality in the movements including rising and falling, and falling and rising. These qualities are present in this project.

Additionally, *Maqam* invokes a set of opposite emotional contents such as struggle, vitality, pain, tension, joy, sadness, emptiness, busyness and calmness, and so on. These elements generate gestural quality, which enhances the visual elements of the project such as the fractured, fragmented, raised, fallen, fragile, torn, destroyed and shattered elements (Figure 75).

I aimed through the use of the musical element to bring other layers to this work that enriches the texture, gesture and emotional qualities in different ways. In a sense, the sound element has generated a sort of dramatic mood, expressed through the emotional and fragmented qualities of the sound (*Maqam*). The use of a traditional transcultural open artistic form contrasts with the closed nature of current political structures in the Middle East.

---

<sup>143</sup> According to Dilorom Karomat, “The maqam and raga represents a unique form of the traditional classical music of East and both have a similar functions. Term maqam (from Arabic: place, staying) is mean a musical mode, musical tone, the separate places for tone on musical instrument, a musical composition. In contemporary time maqam phenomenon is widely cultivated in vast area includes the countries of North Africa (maqam, nuba), the near East (in Turkey called makam, in Azerbaijan mugam, in Iran dastgah) and Central Asia (in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan -Shashmaqom, in Western Chinamukam, in Kashmir- makam or Sufiyana Kalam)”.  
<sup>144</sup> Rob Simms, *The Repertoire of Iraqi Maqam* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 2.

## **STAGE TWO: FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER**

After completing Stage One, I continued experimenting and investigating how I can address similar content in Project 5, but in a different medium and format. I went back to the notion of crumbling paper (folding and unfolding), as a core method as employed in Stage One of this project as well as in Project 2.

I examined other possibilities and methods to create a new work that was both inspired by and based on two elements from Stage One:

1- Fractures/ fragments of the photo image buried under the black tape.

2- The physical remains of the fragments of photograph masked with black tape, left behind after the filming of the video work in Stage One (Figures 74, 76). These elements have a non-representational appearance, in a sense evoking “the notions of ‘abstract’ and ‘concrete’”.<sup>146</sup>

To begin Stage Two, I employed a piece of flat firm metal, A4 paper size, and manipulated the flatness of the metal sheet, by the forceful actions of folding and unfolding, crushing, crumbling, twisting, bending and battering. These acts were repeated in order change the shape of the metal piece from flatness (2D) into gestural form object (3D) (Figure 77). Similarly I used a similar process to construct and deconstruct the photo image in the work *Facing Living: The Past in the Present* in Stage One.

I made a number of these metal objects in various forms and shapes and painted them a matt black colour. I then assembled and displayed the metal objects in a horizontal line format on a wall (Figure 79).

Additionally, I arranged the metal objects from folded to unfolded, from large to small (Figure 79). This arrangement method creates the appearance of physical change and movement from one end to the other end of the lines—every single metal object has a different size and shape. The sense of movement of change is from folding to unfolding or vice versa that signifies the notion of change in form and shapes.

---

<sup>146</sup> Bacal, 259.



Figure 76. Remains of the fragments of photograph masked with black tape.



Figure 77. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2015, the process of making, metal.





Figure 78. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, photograph printed on paper, 48 x 34 x 16 cm.



Figure 79. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, Metal and paint, installation dimensions variable, Installation view.



Figure 80. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail).



Figure 81. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail). 30 x 22 x 10 cm.





Figure 82. Rushdi Anwar, 2014-2015, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail). 25 x 18 x 8 cm.

## PRESENTING INTANGIBLE EPHEMERAL ACTIONS THROUGH TANGIBLE FORM AND MATERIAL

In *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter* through the process of manipulation I shaped and reformed a number of firm flat metals. I have engaged bodily with the materiality of metal; the physical encounter has required forceful action to manipulate the materiality of metal. In a sense, the manipulation actions of the making allude the performative acts in *Facing Living: The Past in the Present* in Stage One, where the gestural transient and altered tangible objects and movements of the performative actions were preserved and captured by the recording of the video camera. This contrasts with *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, where the ephemeral gestures of physical actions through the process of making are absent. Furthermore, I aimed to present the performative actions through the tangible form and materiality of the objects. And “the viewer encounters is not the action itself but forms that carry evidence”.<sup>147</sup> This is expressed by Catherina Albano in this way: “Emotion and narrative indeed coexist in our encounters with things. The role of things to document and act as tangible reminders of personal and collective events is, however, complicated by this convergence and by the possibility of plural readings that it entails, allowing for multiple stories and meanings”.<sup>148</sup>

In Stage Two, the gestures of manipulated acts were preserved and registered. Through the materiality, texture, surface, form of the objects, I was able to present the ephemeral and intangible performative acts and moments of making, “When Attitudes Become Form”.<sup>149</sup>

The forms of the objects are loaded with performative acts of manipulation. The actual performative acts are absent, however the traces or the history of these acts are registered and imbedded in the physical body of the objects. These objects imply the direct body engagement and manipulative actions. However these objects are also presenting absent or missing performative acts as in events or arena. In this stage I presented the objects, not the manipulative actions. Here, the tangible material and its form is shaped by intangible and ephemeral actions. The tangible material and form presents intangible experiences. Artist Richard Serra in *Verb List*, written in 1967-68, summarises actions, materiality, and the process of making, as: “to roll, to crease, to fold, to store, to bend, to shorten, to twist, to dapple, to crumple, to shave, to tear, to chip, to split, to cut”.<sup>150</sup>

These actions are commonly involved in the process of making objects. I have encountered tangible solid material (metal) that demanded these sorts of forceful actions, in order to form the metal and make the objects (the work): “The possibility that the work might emerge from an encounter between the artist’s actions and the particular qualities of materials”.<sup>151</sup> I encountered and engaged bodily, by hand with the material and tools to create the work. This engagement causes alteration of form and the surface of metal that results in the intensive qualities of gestures and textures, which “sets up a sense of

---

<sup>147</sup> Buskirk, 139.

<sup>148</sup> Albano, 93-94.

<sup>149</sup> Buskirk, 133.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.



uneasiness or repulsion".<sup>152</sup> I have used the texture and gesture of the objects to intensify the expressive and meaningful quality of their materiality and form, in this regard Frederick Palmer expresses that:

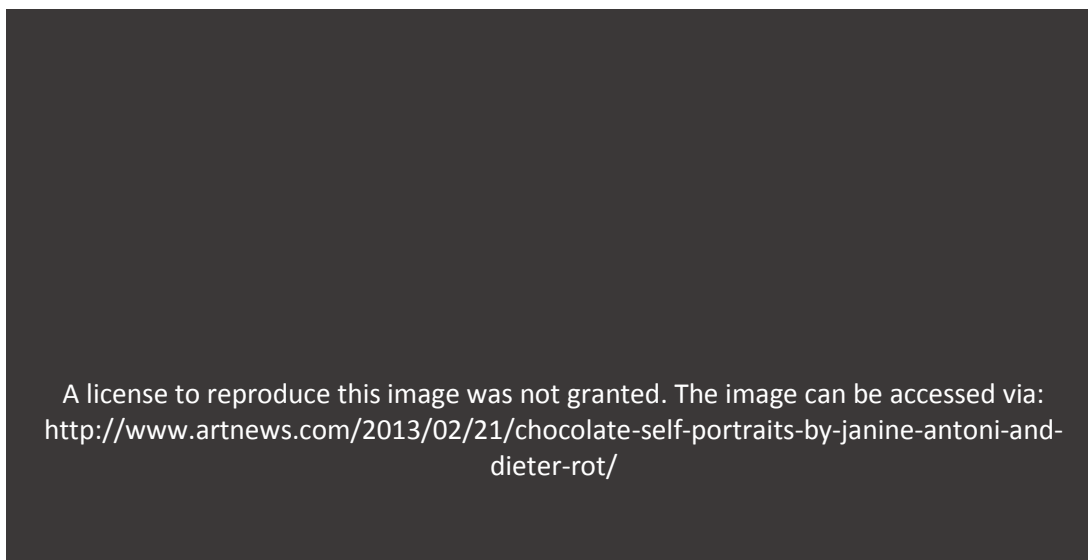
The texture of the sculpture...is an important part. It is the relationship between the quality of the material and the thought, feeling and skill of the sculptor which has resulted in a work in which form, emotion, and thought are fused. The texture is a part of the whole, but it is not obtrusive. We are aware only on closer study of the way in which the sculptor has formed the material with his hands and modelling tools.<sup>153</sup>

In this work, through the appearance of the objects and their tactile qualities, I aimed to evoke and present intangibility gesture of making through the nature of the material (metal) and the presence of texture and gesture to signify ephemeral and intangible actions of the process making. This process echoes the acts of folding and unfolding which is the theme of project 5.

Similarly, artist Janine Antoni has "produce her own verb list, it might start 'to gnaw, to lick, to lather,' all actions that she has performed in the creation of a series of works made from chocolate, lard, and soap".<sup>154</sup> Her work *Gnaw* was made up of 600 pound two cubes of chocolate and lard installed in the gallery space. Antoni encountered the cubes and the material through her physical engagement actions to create the work; she used her teeth on the blocks of chocolate and lard, knocking and biting, and chewing. Through this process of repeated gesture performance, the appearance was altered and the form of the geometric cubes was transformed. However, she has not presented the work as a performance work, rather presented the objects (the cubes). In this regard, Janine Antoni says:

Performance wasn't something that I intended to do. I was doing work that was about process, about the meaning of the making, trying to have a love-hate relationship with the object. I always feel safer if I can bring the viewer back to the making of it. I try to do that in a lot of different ways, by residue, by touch, by processes that are basic to all of our lives...that people might relate to in terms of process, everyday activities- bathing, eating, etc.<sup>155</sup>

The cubes are loaded with gestures of performance and traces of body engagements and that is how Antoni represents intangible performative acts through tangible forms and materiality of objects. This approach coincides with my intentions in Project 5.



Century 2 (New York, N.Y.:

A license to reproduce this image was not granted. The image can be accessed via:  
<http://www.artnews.com/2013/02/21/chocolate-self-portraits-by-janine-antoni-and-dieter-rot/>



Figure 83. Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992, 600 pounds of chocolate, and lard, gnawed by the artist, Collection the Museum of Modern Art, New York, installation dimensions variable.

## CONCLUSION TO PROJECT FIVE

In Project 5 I have continued on exploring and developing the video and installation works based on my experiences, within the Project 2 that I used techniques of crumpling/folding printed photographs, and then unfolded and re-photograph them again.

I exploded the idea of circling through constructing and deconstructing intangible material, which generated ephemeral gesture actions that recorded and presented in a video work, *Stage One: Facing Living: the Past in the Present*. Nevertheless in *Stage Two: Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, I emphasised on presenting the traces of intangible gesture of ephemeral actions through texture and gesture of tangible uncanny objects (material and form).

In this project both media and methods are used to present the transient gesture of actions or events. It is through the process of manipulating tangible forms and materials that I can evoke the readings of transience/ change and political content in this project.

### CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter I have researched and utilise different materials and forms in each of the projects. I developed, examined and explored arrangements and properties of materials and forms. That signified the meaning, content and context of the projects. I examined and explored a range of methods such as “1- Content arising from the genre or medium of the artwork, 2- Content arising from the material of which the artwork is made, 3- Content arising from the scale of the work, 4- Content arising from the temporal duration of the artwork”.<sup>156</sup>

Through the projects works I have employed, humble and different (materials and forms), and processes of making in arrange of forms including installation, photography, photo-painting, sculpture and video.

I employed the use of processes/methods of manipulation of object (material and form), and their means within the theoretical background in the projects. That to address and articulate the specific aspects of recent socio-political issues in Kurdistan, Iraq and the Middle East.

---

<sup>156</sup> McEvilley, 72-75.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

This practice-based research project examined and explored the following three primary research questions:

1. How can my experience and knowledge of the socio-political issues in recent Kurdish history be applied to inform artworks that address the “broader” human condition regarding change, transience and renewal?
2. What material properties, processes, pictorial conventions and installation practices can be employed in order to amplify and reflect on the complex experience of being in the world and to reconcile ideas relating to suffering, change and politics?
3. In what ways can I employ Mulla Sadra’s and Martin Heidegger’s theories of change, matter and form to inform the production of new works that address the issues in relation to socio-political context?

### THE PROJECT HAS MADE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

**Firstly**, the project’s outcomes contribute to this field by building upon the understanding of the notion of change, material and form in artwork in relation to philosophical arguments developed in both Persian philosophy and German philosophy. It has examined particular theoretical aspects of two thinkers: Mulla Sadra’s (1572-1640) notion of change and Martin Heidegger’s (1889-1976) notion of thing or object: matter and form. This project not only incorporated and combined aspects of the theories, but also brought together ideas from two different cultures civilisations and from different periods of human history in an original manner. The combination of the theories of Mulla Sadra from East: notion of change<sup>157</sup> and Martin Heidegger from West: notion of thing: “Earth and world” matter and form, provided insights and better understanding conceptually towards my understandings of working processes in terms of content and context.

This project conceptually facilitates and provides new knowledge, by combining these theories in relationship to being, change, and object (Thing): material and form in contemporary art practice in connection to political art. Additionally throughout the study the theories of both philosophers have been used as a platform, which provided me with insights and a better conceptual understanding of working process in terms of content and context. This in turn has assisted in the development of an appropriate working process and methodology in order to develop a particular vocabulary of practice. For example my manipulation of found domestic objects (i.e. chairs) that I have used in this project to

---

<sup>157</sup>Change is fundamental and common to all it is the nature of things. If we investigate the nature of things, we realize that it is composed of ‘Potentiality and Actuality’, through which change becomes manifest. It is clear that change is a process of transformation from one state of being to a different state. This process of change classified into two categories 1- Instantaneous change, 2- Gradual change.

evoke the theme of displacement was informed by my understandings of Mulla Sadra's theory of Instantaneous change applied to materials processes and forms. The ordinary everyday chair was transformed into a traumatic object, deformed and dysfunctional, creating a tension between homely and unhomely readings.

Practice in this project has embraced those theories mentioned above, (particularly the concept of change). I have created a body of work which is informed by selected ideas on being and change from the East(Persia/Iran) and the West (Germany) that have assisted me in making artworks that address the recent social and political turmoil in Kurdistan (Iraq), and the region "The Middle East". These ideas inform my thinking and aid my understanding of the effects of displacement and the recent political violence.

**Secondly**, this project not only incorporated and used the aspect of the combined theories of Iran (Eastern) and Germany (Western), but it has investigated artists and artworks from Kurdistan, The Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Western origins that explore the themes of dislocation. This combination of artists from different parts of the world, now part of my community of practice has provided insight to this project. These artists are rarely discussed together, if at all. This research has tried to remedy this. By researching how each artist in different contexts has used different mediums to address socio-political issues I hope to emphasise the humanist and redemptive nature of art.

The project has focused on contemporary practice from Kurdistan, the Middle East and Latin America as these regions/countries that have so much in common in terms of socio-political disturbance such as displacement, political violence and civil war. Although the details of each are different, nevertheless the core of the issues very much the same. These regions have experienced racial and social injustice, disruption, violence and the effects of colonisation, which have caused instability and political turmoil.

Approximately half way through this project it became apparent that I had to consider the new generation of Kurdish contemporary artist like Hiwa K, who have lived and experienced the political turmoil and conflict zone in Kurdistan in connection with the region (Middle East). This study has considered how Hiwa K has responded to political violence of the region in recent history, and how he has articulated and responded to political conflict by addressing issues of violence and trauma particularly to Kurdistan and Iraq. It has considered how he employs art as a device for hope through his diverse approaches to making and exhibiting art.

Hiwa K's use of object based works addresses the importance of materiality through objects and their historical associations with political and social unrest. This has resonated strongly with my approach in this PhD. Recognising the similarities and differences between our works has been useful for me in the development of my work.

**Thirdly**, this project has focused and emphasised on social equity in a wider sense. Throughout the development and towards to the end of this project, I have extended and transformed the personal

experience into the collective social experience (otherness). To further emphasise; the body of work that I produced is not simply self-referential. The project opened up a space for an art that addresses political violence, change and renewal, which moves from the specific (political event) to the general (human condition). It has sought to explore and understand the human condition, and the struggle between the space of aggression of political conflicts, and the search for hope, courage and redemption.

In addition I have used a range of public platforms (exhibitions, public projects, artist talks, interviews, etc.) that opened up opportunities to engage directly with the public in different contexts that offered new knowledge. For instance, a series of my photographic installations (Project 2: *Past in the Present*), was acquired by The Australian War Memorial in Canberra, for its contemporary collection. In the interview with the Canberra Times newspaper, Ryan Johnston, head of art at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, said:

The memorial was currently focused on developing the cultural diversity of its art collection. (Anwar's) experience of the war in Iraq is very, very different to the way it's represented in the collection at the moment... It broadens the way you can tell these stories, but also increases our audience appeal, because there's a whole generation of Kurdish Australians now who would like to be able to come here and see their story told.<sup>158</sup>

The project has not only focused upon the political turmoil, desperation, vulnerability and fragility of the societies as well as individuals whose lives it affects. But has highlighted and emphasised that courage, resilience, compassion and hope can coexist alongside issues of political violence. It is worth repeating that this project uses the redemptive power of art to highlight the human condition, which when under difficult situations requires and seeks hope, care, sympathy, renewal and light. I have used art as a device for redemption in connection with the region; the project is situated as mediator between horror and redemption.

**Fourthly**, the content and context of this research study was made manifest through a multi-disciplinary approach: Social History, Philosophy and Fine Art are called into play. The project utilised a diversity of media and methods including installation, sculpture, found object, photography, manipulated photography treated with material and video to evoke complexity of content and to address the primary questions (mentioned above). That has granted an opportunity to bring together mixtures of components and contents to produce original bodies of work. I used combination of mediums, in order to reveal a fascination with the physical properties of objects and their meaning to invoke the theme of each project.

The research project produced outcomes that emphasised and explored the critical role of materials in producing meaning. To do this the research sought to develop a material vocabulary and language of forms. This position informs the creation of the production (artworks) in this project. The process of

---

<sup>158</sup>Sally Pryor, "Memorial Collection Takes a Kurdish Turn," *The Canberra Times*, 23 August, 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/memorial-collection-takes-a-kurdish-turn-20130822-2setk.html>.

making went through many stages of testing, while simultaneously examining a range of methods to find appropriate solutions that addressed the content and context of the work. Utilising new combinations of various methods and media it has facilitated and provided the opportunity to make new connections between contents and contexts of the work, through the manipulation and juxtapositions of objects, images and materials.

In addition I have examined and explored conception of material and form based upon my personal experience associated with the space of violence. I used combinations of materials to articulate the multiplicity and contradictions of social and political turmoil. I used found domestic objects such as a chair to evoke issues of dislocation (see Chapter Three: Project 4).

Furthermore I used ephemeral materials such as smoke (soot) in order to evoke the readings and sensations, for example in artworks that respond to the gas attack on Halabja in 1988 (see Chapter Three: Project 2).

**Finally**, this project started with philosophical and academic arguments to justify the production and the process of making. Nevertheless, the process of making the artwork has become the primary key outcome in which to search and expose new knowledge and reflect value in this project. Although this project has grown out of the theoretical background discussed above. It became apparent, after my confirmation seminar that the project not only focused on theoretical arguments as a source of knowledge, but also took on board other forms of knowledge that enriched and contributed significantly to the course of this study. The project has permitted me to share my understandings through direct engagement and discussion with art communities, non-art communities, professional practice activities, informal research and life experience generally. I have gained knowledge through the experience of making and encountering challenges, learning and thinking through making, testing and finding, reconcile and finding solution for difficulties, seeking informal knowledge from direct conversations and discussions, as well as by embracing knowledge from my daily living experiences, engaging and absorbing different culture environments, seeing through the eyes of others.

By working through this diversity of approaches the project gradually became clear, and in doing so I have been able to articulate and create new knowledge and ideas through the process of making and doing. I have been able via this research to develop new artworks that combine feeling, knowing and making to address these important issues and in doing so assert the human values of hope, courage and compassion.

I believe art cannot change the ugliness of socio-politic violence that has caused devastating lost to humanity, and its civilisations. Nevertheless art is a powerful tool to generate awareness, dialogues, reconcile, courage, empathy and touch the hearts of those who are seeking the light.





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Making the Ordinary Anything But. Mona Hatoum Transforms Domestic Objects into Unsettling Sculptures That Hit Viewers in the Gut." *ARTnews* 104, no. 5 (2005): 124-27.
- Adeli, Lisa. "Who Are the Kurds?" University of Arizona Last modified Accessed May 4, 2016.  
<http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Who%20Are%20the%20Kurds.pdf>.
- Albano, Caterina. *Fear and Art in the Contemporary World*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.
- Ankori, Gannit. *Palestinian Art*. London: Reaktion, 2006.
- Antoni, Janine. "Mona Hatoum." *BOMB Magazine*. Last modified 1998. Accessed 2 April, 2016.  
<http://bombmagazine.org/article/2130/mona-hatoum>.
- Archer, Michael, Guy Brett, M. Catherine de Zegher, and Mona Hatoum. *Mona Hatoum*. London; New York: Phaidon Press, 1997.
- Bacal, Edward. "The Concrete and the Abstract: On Doris Salcedo, Teresa Margolles and Santiago Sierra's Tenuous Bodies." *Parallax* 21, no. 3 (2015): 259-70.
- Barlow, Phyllida, Heike Munder, Thomas Trummer, and Gegenwartskunst Migros Museum für. *Displaced Fractures : On the Break Lines of Architecture and Its Bodies = Über Die Bruchlinien Von Architekturen Und Ihren Körpern*. Zürich; Munich, Germany; New York, NY: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst ; Siemens Stiftung : Distributed by JRP/Ringier ; USA [Distributed by] D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2011.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. London: NLB, 1977.
- Black, George, Watch Human Rights, and Watch Middle East. *Genocide in Iraq : The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993.
- Boltanski, Christian, Bracha Ettinger, Museum Israel, and Pavilion Billy Rose. *Lessons of Darkness : Billy Rose Pavilion, 1989*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1989.
- Brock, Brian. "The Form of the Matter: Heidegger, Ontology and Christian Ethics." *IJST International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 3 (2001): 257-79.
- Buskirk, Martha. *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.
- Candela, Iria and Chris Miller. *Art in Latin America, 1990-2010*. 2013.
- Channel, la Biennale di Venezia. "Biennale Arte 2015 - Hiwa K. ." la Biennale di Venezia Channel. Last modified 2015. Accessed March 8, 2015, 2016.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prT3WhzONPY>.

- Cook, William. "Richard Long Interview: 'I Was Always an Artist, Even When I Was Two Years Old'." *The Spectator*. Last modified 8 August 2015. Accessed 29 May, 2016.  
<http://www.spectator.co.uk/2015/08/richard-long-interview-i-was-always-an-artist-even-when-i-was-two-years-old/>.
- Day, Jesse. *Line Color Form : The Language of Art and Design*. New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2013.
- Dizard, Jake, Christopher Walker, and Vanessa E. Tucker. "Countries at the Crossroads an Analysis of Democratic Governance, 2011." (2011): 625. Accessed May 6, 2016.  
<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10552007>.
- Doris Salcedo, Julie Rodrigues Widholm, Madeleine Grynsztejn. *Doris Salcedo*. Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Dover, Caitlin. "How Artist Doris Salcedo's Practice Quietly Challenges Injustice." *How Artist Doris Salcedo's Practice Quietly Challenges Injustice*, June 29, 2015. Accessed April 26, 2016.  
<http://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/how-artist-doris-salcedos-practice-quietly-challenges-injustice>.
- Eshkevari, M. F. "Mulla Sadra's Theory of Substantial Motion." *Publications - Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society New Series* 5 (2007): 25-44.
- Ferguson, Russell. *Out There : Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass.: New Museum of Contemporary Art ; MIT Press, 1990.
- Filkins, Dexter. "Kurds Are Finally Heard: Turkey Burned Our Villages." *The New York Times*. October 24, 2003, 2003. Accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/24/world/kurds-are-finally-heard-turkey-burned-our-villages.html>.
- Harries, Karsten. *Art Matters : A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "the Origin of the Work of Art"*. [Dordrecht]: Springer, 2009.
- Hatoum, Mona, Edward W. Said, Sheena Wagstaff, and Britain Tate. *Mona Hatoum : The Entire World as a Foreign Land*. London: Tate Gallery Pub., 2000.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Heidegger, Martin and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings : Martin Heidegger*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Holmes, Pernilla. "Making the Ordinary Anything but - Mona Hatoum Transforms Domestic Objects into Unsettling Sculptures That Hit Viewers in the Gut." *ARTnews*. 104, no. 5 (2005): 124.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts : Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Ingold, Tim. *The Life of Lines*. New York, NY: Routledge 2015.

- Kamal, Muhammad. *From Essence to Being : The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger*. London: ICAS Press, 2010.
- Kamal, Muhammad. "Dressing after Dressing: Sadras Interpretation of Change " *Open Journal of Philosophy* Vol.3, no. 1 (2013 2013): 55-62.  
<http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperDownload.aspx?DOI=10.4236/ojpp.2013.31009>.
- Khalaf, Anthony Downey and Amal. "Performative Resonances; Hiwa K in Conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf." *Ibraaz*. Last modified 2015. Accessed 6.10.2015, 2015.  
<http://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/171>.
- MacAdam, Barbara A. "Top Ten Artnews Stories: "Not a Picture but an Event"." *Art News*. Last modified Accessed 29 May, 2016. <http://www.artnews.com/2007/11/01/top-ten-artnews-stories-not-a-picture-but-an-event/>.
- Manchester, Elizabeth. "Mona Hatoum: Untitled (Wheelchair) 1998 " Tate Gallery. Last modified 2000. Accessed 26 April, 2016. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hatoum-untitled-wheelchair-t07497/text-summary>.
- McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London; New York; New York: I.B. Tauris ; In the U.S.A. and Canada distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- McEvelley, Thomas. *Art & Discontent : Theory at the Millennium*. Kingston, N.Y.: McPherson & Co., 1991.
- McTighe, Monica E. *Framed Spaces: Photography and Memory in Contemporary Installation Art*. Dartmouth College Press, 2012.
- Meiselas, Susan and Martin van Bruinessen. *Kurdistan : In the Shadow of History*. New York: Random House, 1997.
- Mikdadi, Salwa. "The States of Being in Mona Hatoum's Artwork." *Darat al Funun*, The Khalid Shoman Foundation. Last modified Accessed June 6, 2015.  
[http://thekhalidshomanfoundation.org/main/activit/curentl/mona\\_hatoum/5.htm](http://thekhalidshomanfoundation.org/main/activit/curentl/mona_hatoum/5.htm).
- News, Asia BBC. "Profile: Malala Yousafzai." Last modified 10 December 2014. Accessed 3 May, 2016.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23241937>.
- Online, The Forum: BBC World Service. "Lines." BBC World Service Online Last modified 2014. Accessed 27 April, 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02bggnr>.
- Palmer, Frederick. *Visual Awareness*. London: Batsford, 1972.
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked : The Politics of Performance*. London; New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Pryor, Sally. "Memorial Collection Takes a Kurdish Turn." *The Canberra Times*. 23 August, 2013,  
<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/memorial-collection-takes-a-kurdish-turn-20130822-2setk.html>.

- Robertson, Jean and Craig McDaniel. *Themes of Contemporary Art : Visual Art after 1980*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, Parviz Morewedge, Henry Corbin, Philosophy Society for the Study of Islamic, Science, and Studies Institute for Cultural. *The Metaphysics of Mulla Sadra : Kitab Al-Mashair = the Book of Metaphysical Prehensions*. New York City, N.Y., U.S.A.: SSIPS, 1992.
- Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Salcedo, Doris, Carlos Basualdo, Nancy Princenthal, and Andreas Huyssen. *Doris Salcedo*. London: Phaidon, 2000.
- Salcedo, Doris, Dan Cameron, Charles Merewether, Art New Museum of Contemporary, and Fe Site Santa. *Doris Salcedo*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.
- Salcedo, Doris and Cube White. *Doris Salcedo : Neither*. London: White Cube, 2004.
- Say, Aliya. "Hiwa K: For Whom the Bell Tolls." *The Art Newspaper*. 01 September 2015, 2015 Accessed March 24, 2016, <http://theartnewspaper.com/features/hiwa-k-for-whom-the-bell-tolls/>.
- Sazzad, Rehnuma. "Hatoum, Said and Foucault: Resistance through Revealing the Power-Knowledge Nexus? ." *Postcolonial Text* Vol 4, no. 3 (2008): 1-24. Accessed March 22, 2016. <http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/891/791>.
- Schneider, Rebecca. *Performing Remains Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Sengupta, Somini. "60 Million People Fleeing Chaotic Lands, U.N. Says." Last modified JUNE 18, 2015. Accessed 28 April, 2016. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/world/60-million-people-fleeing-chaotic-lands-un-says.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/world/60-million-people-fleeing-chaotic-lands-un-says.html?_r=0).
- Shaheen, Kareem. "Isis Fighters Destroy Ancient Artefacts at Mosul Museum." *The Guardian*. Friday 27 February, 2015. Accessed 9 April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/26/isis-fighters-destroy-ancient-artefacts-mosul-museum-iraq>.
- Simms, Rob. *The Repertoire of Iraqi Maqam*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004.
- Sinan, Omar. "Iraq to Hang 'Chemical Ali' : Saddam Hussein's Cousin, Ali Hassan Majid, Faces Death for His Role in Gassing Kurds." *Tampa Bay Times*. June 25, 2007, 2007. Accessed May 6, 2016, [http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq\\_to\\_hang\\_Chemica.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq_to_hang_Chemica.shtml).
- Sollins, Susan. "Doris Salcedo: Variations on Brutality." Art21.org. Last modified 2013. Accessed 15 January, 2016. <http://www.art21.org/texts/doris-salcedo/interview-doris-salcedo-variations-on-brutality>.

- Sollins, Susan, Marybeth Sollins, Wesley Miller, and Art Inc. *Art 21: Art in the Twenty-First Century 5*. New York: Art21, Inc., 2009.
- Sollins, Susan, Marybeth Sollins, and Service Public Broadcasting. *Art 21 : Art in the Twenty-First Century 2*. New York, N.Y.: Abrams, 2003.
- Swartz-Turfle, Harry. "Failing Better: William Kentridge's Drawing Lessons." Hyperallergic Newsletter. Last modified 2010. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://hyperallergic.com/4985/william-kentridge-drawing-lessons/>.
- Trigg, Dylan. *The Aesthetics of Decay : Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Washington, Post. "Who Are the Kurds?" (1999). Accessed May 6, 2016. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm>.
- Adeli, Lisa. "Who Are the Kurds?" University of Arizona Last modified Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Who%20Are%20the%20Kurds.pdf>.
- Albano, Caterina. *Fear and Art in the Contemporary World*. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.
- Ankori, Gannit. *Palestinian Art*. London: Reaktion, 2006.
- Archer, Michael, Guy Brett, M. Catherine de Zegher, and Mona Hatoum. *Mona Hatoum*. London; New York: Phaidon Press, 1997.
- Bacal, Edward. "The Concrete and the Abstract: On Doris Salcedo, Teresa Margolles and Santiago Sierra's Tenuous Bodies." *Parallax* 21, no. 3 (2015): 259-70.
- Black, George, Watch Human Rights, and Watch Middle East. *Genocide in Iraq : The Anfal Campaign against the Kurds*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993.
- Channel, la Biennale di Venezia. "Biennale Arte 2015 - Hiwa K. ." la Biennale di Venezia Channel. Last modified 2015. Accessed March 8, 2015, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prT3Whz0NPY>.
- Dizard, Jake, Christopher Walker, and Vanessa E. Tucker. "Countries at the Crossroads an Analysis of Democratic Governance, 2011." (2011): 625. Accessed May 6, 2016. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10552007>.
- Filkins, Dexter. "Kurds Are Finally Heard: Turkey Burned Our Villages." *The New York times*. October 24, 2003, 2003. Accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/24/world/kurds-are-finally-heard-turkey-burned-our-villages.html>.
- Hatoum, Mona, Edward W. Said, Sheena Wagstaff, and Britain Tate. *Mona Hatoum : The Entire World as a Foreign Land*. London: Tate Gallery Pub., 2000.

Heidegger, Martin and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings : Martin Heidegger*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Holmes, Pernilla. "Making the Ordinary Anything but - Mona Hatoum Transforms Domestic Objects into Unsettling Sculptures That Hit Viewers in the Gut." *ARTnews*. 104, no. 5 (2005): 124.

Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts : Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Khalaf, Anthony Downey and Amal. "Performative Resonances  
Hiwa K in Conversation with Anthony Downey and Amal Khalaf." *Ibraaz*. Last modified 2015. Accessed 6.10.2015, 2015. <http://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/171>.

McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London; New York; New York: I.B. Tauris ; In the U.S.A. and Canada distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Meiselas, Susan and Martin van Bruinessen. *Kurdistan : In the Shadow of History*. New York: Random House, 1997.

Post, Washington. "Who Are the Kurds?" (1999). Accessed May 6, 2016.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/kurdprofile.htm>.

Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Salcedo, Doris, Carlos Basualdo, Nancy Princenthal, and Andreas Huyssen. *Doris Salcedo*. London: Phaidon, 2000.

Salcedo, Doris, Dan Cameron, Charles Merewether, Art New Museum of Contemporary, and Fe Site Santa. *Doris Salcedo*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.

Salcedo, Doris and Cube White. *Doris Salcedo : Neither*. London: White Cube, 2004.

Salcedo, Doris, Julie Rodrigues Widholm, Madeleine Grynsztejn, and Art Museum of Contemporary. *Doris Salcedo*. 2015.

Say, Aliya. "Hiwa K: For Whom the Bell Tolls." *The Art Newspaper*. 01 September 2015, 2015  
Accessed March 24, 2016, <http://theartnewspaper.com/features/hiwa-k-for-whom-the-bell-tolls/>.

Sazzad, Rehnuma. "Hatoum, Said and Foucault: Resistance through Revealing the Power-Knowledge Nexus? ." *Postcolonial Text* Vol 4, no. 3 (2008): 1-24. Accessed March 22, 2016.  
<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/891/791>.

Sinan, Omar. " Iraq to Hang 'Chemical Ali' : Saddam Hussein's Cousin, Ali Hassan Majid, Faces Death for His Role in Gassing Kurds." *Tampa Bay times*. June 25, 2007, 2007. Accessed May 6, 2016,  
[http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq\\_to\\_hang\\_Chemica.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2007/06/25/Worldandnation/Iraq_to_hang_Chemica.shtml).



Sollins, Susan, Marybeth Sollins, Wesley Miller, and Inc Art. *Art 21: Art in the Twenty-First Century* 5. New York: Art21, Inc., 2009.

## **Appropriate Durable Record (ADR)**

**(Visual documentation of the research projects processes and outcomes)**



### 3.2. PROJECT ONE: *HANGING ISSUES*



Figure 84. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Monfai Cultural Center / Living Museum, Chiang Mai, Thailand, installation view.



Figure 85. Rushdi Anwar, texture of handmade Thai paper (Kada Saa) the skin of the Saa's bark dried out, Idin Paper Mill, Lampang, Thailand, 2012.





Figure 86. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.



Figure 87. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.





Figure 88. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Idin Paper Mill with master paper maker (Suphan Promsen), the process of making, Lampang, Thailand.



Figure 89. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, the processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.





Figure 90. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.



Figure 91. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.





Figure 92. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Preservation House Paper Mill, processes of making, Ban Ton Pao, Chaing Mai, Thailand.



Figure 93. Rushdi Anwar, *Idin Paper Mill*, Lampang, Thailand, 2012.





Figure 94. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, (detail), 2012



Figure 95. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Monfai Cultural Center / Living Museum, Chiang Mai, Thailand.





Figure 96. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2015 Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, The Atrium Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia, installation view.



Figure 97. Rushdi Anwar, *Hanging Issues*, 2015 Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, The Atrium Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia, installation view.

### 3.2. PROJECT 2: *PAST IN THE PRESENT*



Figure 98. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (Australian War Memorial, contemporary collection, Canberra), 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke, photograph, smoke on board, and Smoke on sand paper and mixed medium, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view, 2013.





Left: Figure 99. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on board and mixed medium.

Right: Figure 100. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on board and mixed medium.



Figure 101. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on canvas and mixed medium, 26 x 20 cm.

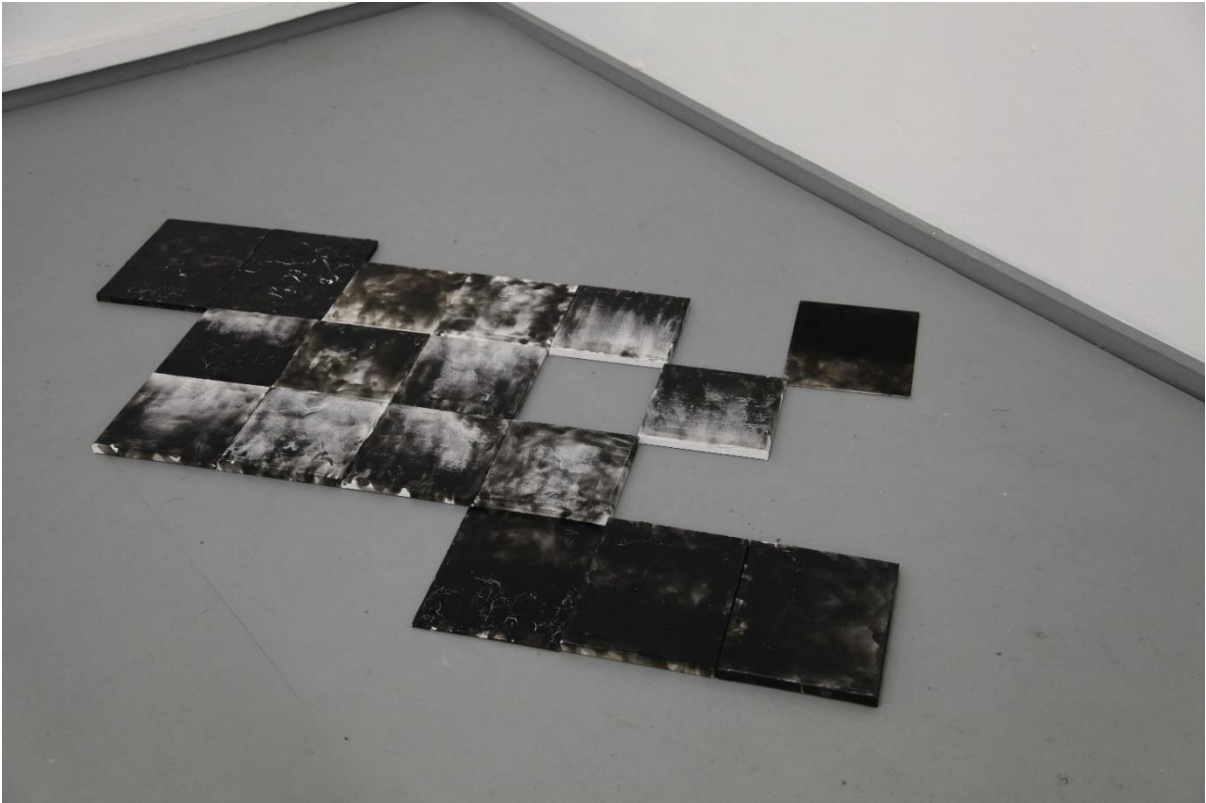


Figure 102. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, experiment with smoke on canvas and mixed medium, installation dimensions variable, installation view.



Figure 103. Rushdi Anwar, *Material Perception (Part 1)* collaboration exhibition, 2014, D11 Artist-Led Exhibition Space, Melbourne, installation view.





Figure 104. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, 2012-2013, photograph print treated with smoke on board and mixed medium, 15 x 20 cm.



Figure 105. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (*Matter and Space*, group exhibition), 2012, Ne Na Contemporary Art Space, Chiang Mai, Thailand.





Figure 106. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (*The after State*, collaboration exhibition), 2014, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, installation view.



Figure 107. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (*The after State*, collaboration exhibition), 2014, details.



Figure 108. Rushdi Anwar, *"Landlock"* exhibition, 2013, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view.



Figure 109. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (*Landlock* exhibition details).

### 3.4. PROJECT 3: *KNOWING AND UNKNOWING, CIRCLE OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE*



Figure 110.

*Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2012- 2014, white chalk and dark pigment.





Figure 111. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), (*Landlock* exhibition), 2013, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney.



Figure 112. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2013, ("*Landlock*" exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of white chalk on dark platform.



Figure 113. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2013, (*Landlock* exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of crushed white chalk on dark platform.



Figure 114. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, (detail), 2013, (*Landlock* exhibition) Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, a pile of fine dust of crushed white chalk on dark platform.



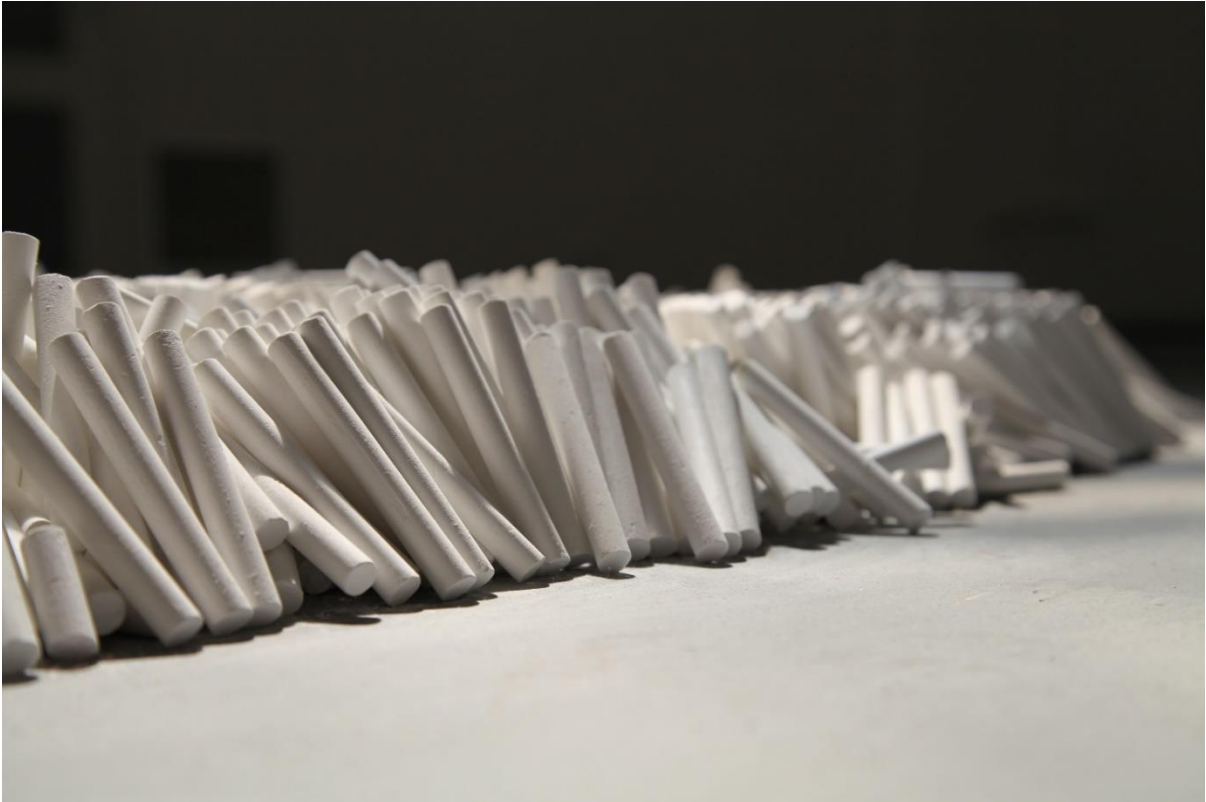


Figure 115. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2013, still image, video, 4.30 minutes, HD video sound installation, one channel.



Figure 116. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2014, RMIT University, building two, installation view.





Figure 117. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2014, (*Material Perception*, collaboration exhibition), First Site Gallery, Melbourne, installation view.



Figure 118. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2013, (*Landlock* exhibition), Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney, installation view.



Figure 119. Rushdi Anwar, *Knowing and Unknowing, Circle of Hope and Struggle*, 2014, Gossard Spaces, RMIT University, white chalk and dark, pigment, dimensions variable, installation view.



### 3.5. PROJECT 4: *IRHAL (EXPEL)*, HOPE AND THE SORROW OF DISPLACEMENT



Figure 120. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, Installation view.



Figure 121. Rushdi Anwar, collecting a discarded chair from roadside trash, Melbourne, 2015.



Figure 122. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, some sketches of installations options early stages, 2013-2014.





Figure 123. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, testing a pile of chairs, 2015.



Figure 124. Rushdi Anwar, *burning process*, 2012.



Figure 125. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, during the process of putting together the chairs, early stage of installing the work, 2015.





Figure 126. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, early stage of installation the work, 2015.



Figure 127. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, (Art for Social Change), Incinerator Art Award, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view.



Figure 128. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2014, the process of installing the work.



Figure 129. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2014, (*Chaos: Yesterday and today* exhibition) Dark Horse Experiment Gallery, Melbourne, installation view.





Figure 130. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, (detail).



Figure 131. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, Installation view.



Figure 132. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, (detail), Human Rights Arts and Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne.



Figure 133. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, Human Rights Arts & Film Festival, No Vacancy Project Space, Melbourne, de-installing view.





Figure 134. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, installing view, L 750 x W 220 x H 250 cm.



Figure 135. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, installing view.





Figure 136. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2016, The Installation Zone, The Artist Project: Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto, Canada, before installing the work.



Figure 137. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, the burning chairs covered with snow, Toronto, Canada, 2016.



Figure 138. Rushdi Anwar, *Irhal (Expel)*, *Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement*, 2015, (Art for Social Change), Incinerator Art Award, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Installation view, L 600 x W 200 x H 250 cm.



### 3.6. PROJECT 5:

#### STAGE ONE: FACING LIVING: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT



Figure 139. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, still images, video sound installation, one channel, 12 min 30 sec.

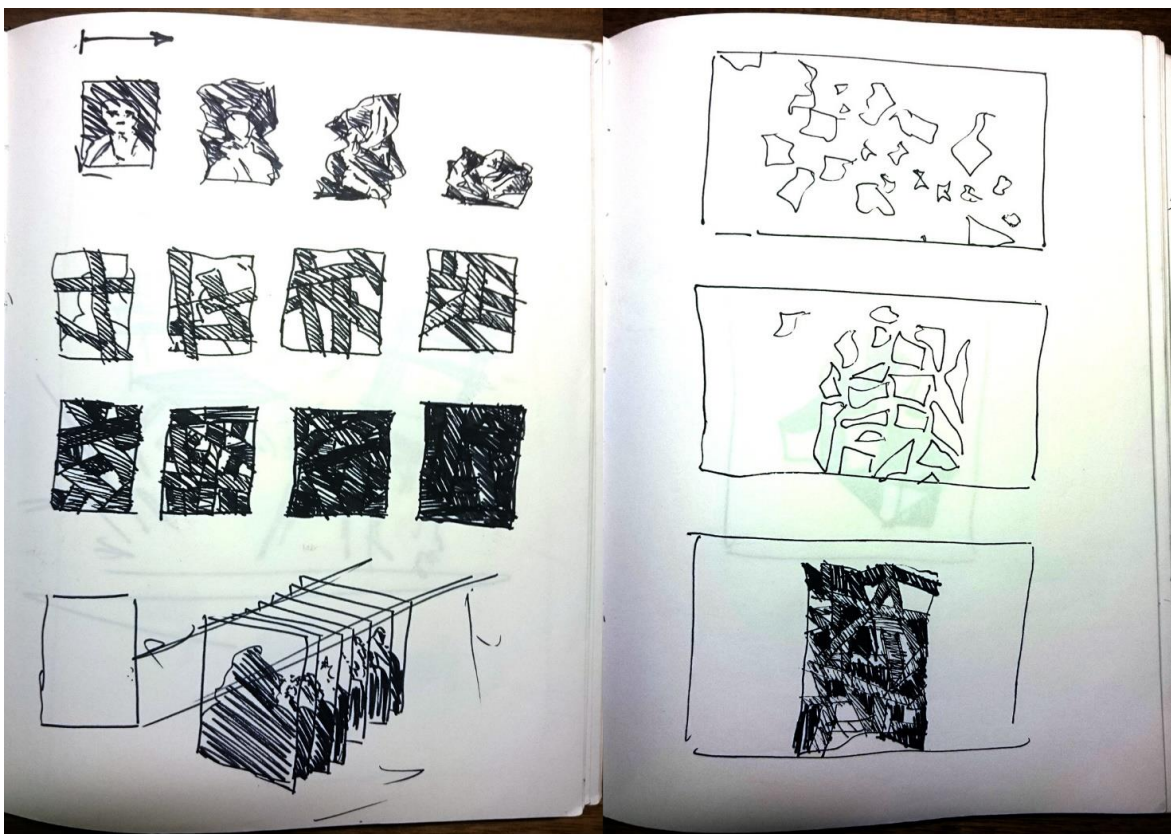


Figure 140. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, some sketches of the work early stage, 2013-2014.



Figure 141. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, photograph and masking tape.



Figure 142. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape.





Figure 143. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape.



Figure 144. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, working process, crumpled photography with masking tape.





Figure 145. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, video still image.



Figure 146. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, video still image.



Figure 147. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, video still image.



Figure 148. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, video still image.



Figure 149. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, (*Lost in Translocation*) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, photograph crumpled on the shelf.



Figure 150. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, (*Lost in Translocation*) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, installation view.

**3.6. PROJECT 5:**  
**STAGE TWO: *FOLDING AND UNFOLDING DARK MATTER***



Figure 151. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2014-2015, (*The after State* collaboration exhibition), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, Metal and paint, Installation view



Figure 152. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, some sketches of the work early stage, 2012-2014.



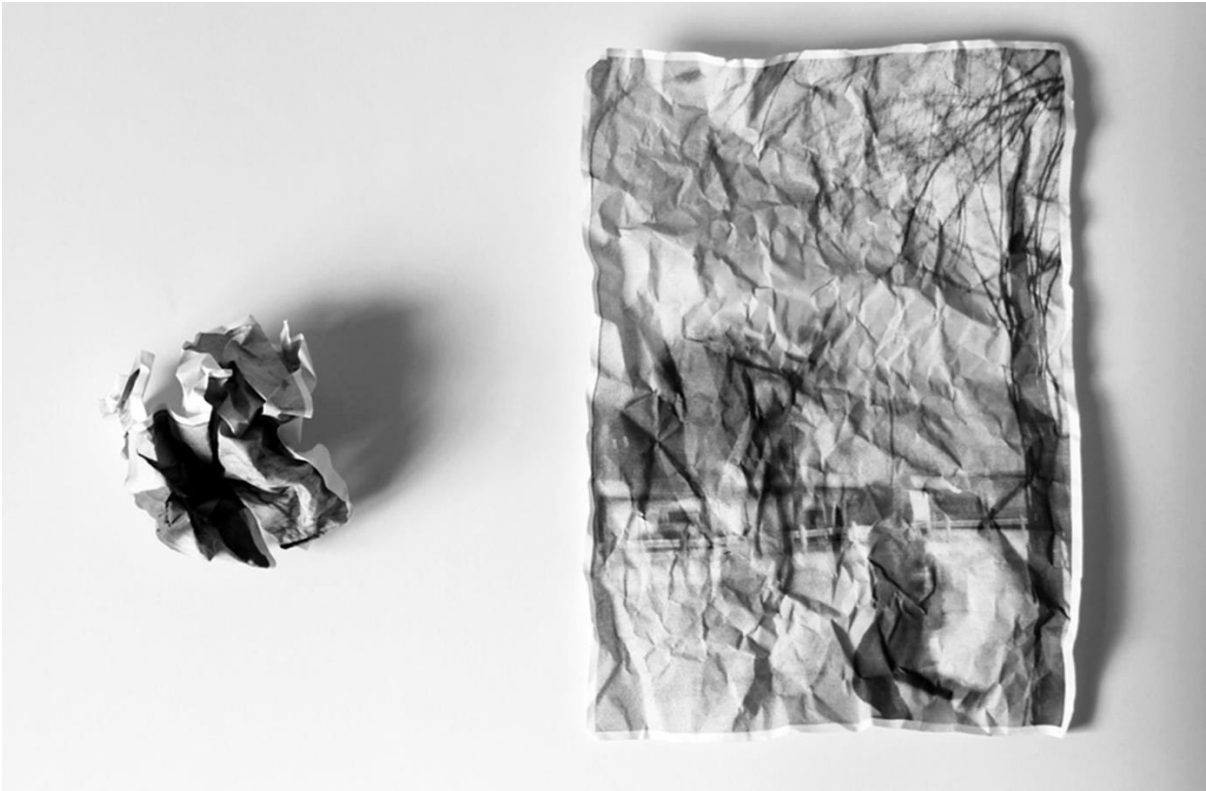


Figure 153. Rushdi Anwar, *Past in the Present*, (detail), 2012



Figure 154. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2015.





Figure 155. Rushdi Anwar, *Facing living: The Past in the Present*, 2015, remains of the photographs and masking tape.



Figure 156. A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-rigged vehicle, Iraq, (File Photo: Reuters), 2014.



Figure 157. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2014.



Figure 158. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2014-2015.



Figure 159. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2014-2015.





Figure 160. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2014-2015.



Figure 161. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2014-2015.





Figure 162. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2015, photographs printed on paper and burnt wooden self, 45 x 30 x 20 cm.



Figure 163. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2015, photographs printed on paper, 45 x 35 x 20 cm.





Figure 164. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, 2014-2015, (*Lost in Translocation*) exhibition, Project Space Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, Metal and paint, Installation view



Figure 165. Rushdi Anwar, *Folding and Unfolding Dark Matter*, (detail), 2014-2015.

**PHD EXHIBITION: RMIT SCHOOL OF ART GALLERY, 2016**



Figure 166. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.



Figure 167. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.



Figure 168. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.

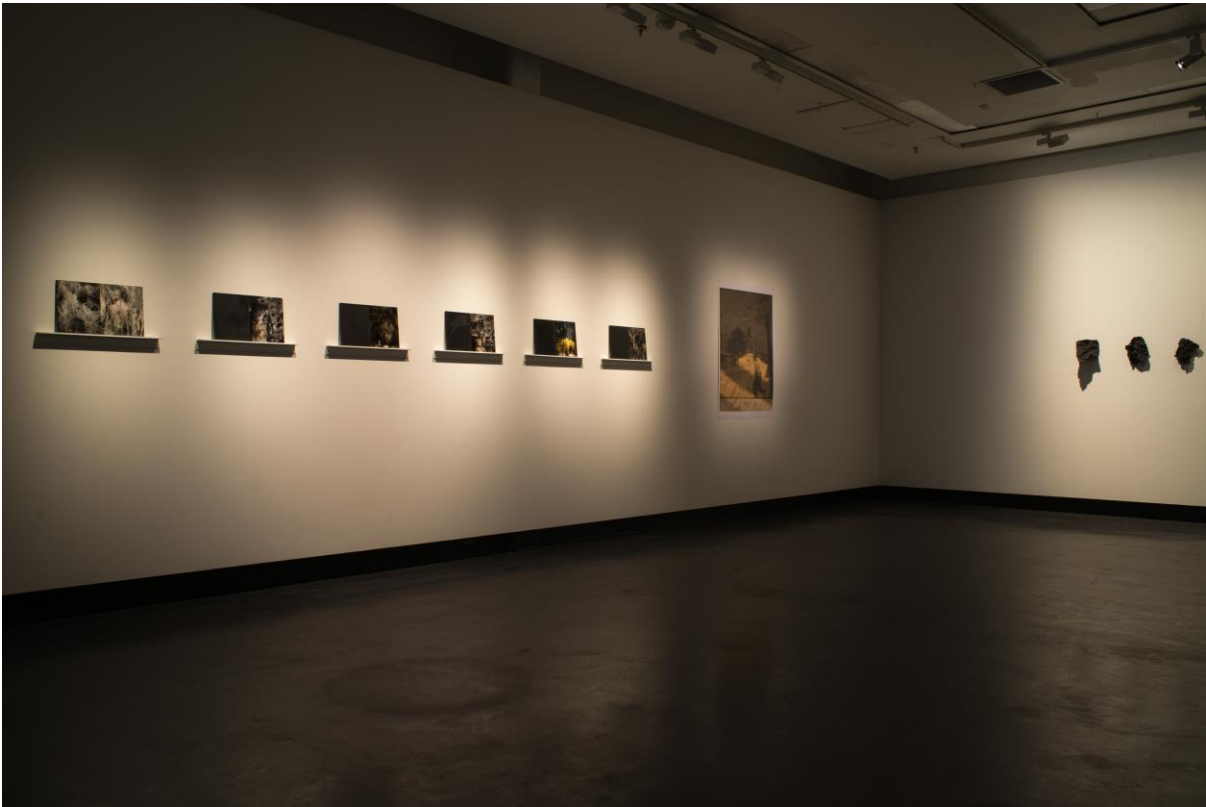


Figure 169. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.



Figure 170. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.





Figure 171. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.



Figure 172. Rushdi Anwar, PhD exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, 2016, Installation view.

